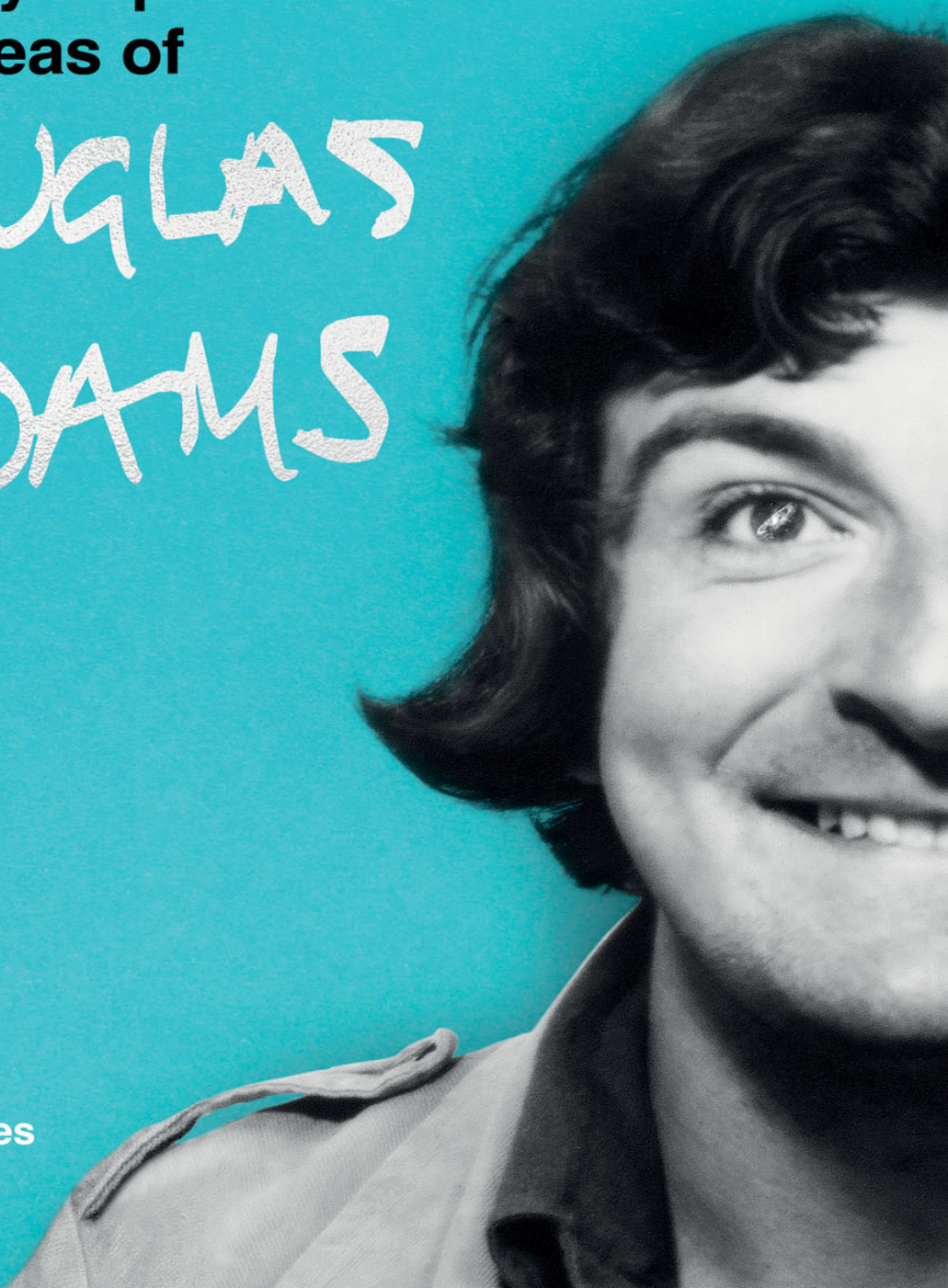


42

**The Wildly Improbable
Ideas of**

**DOUGLAS
ADAMS**

**Edited by
Kevin Jon Davies**





42

The Wildly Improbable Ideas of DOUGLAS ADAMS

Edited by
KEVIN JON DAVIES

Foreword by
STEPHEN FRY



unbound

With special thanks to the following patrons of this book

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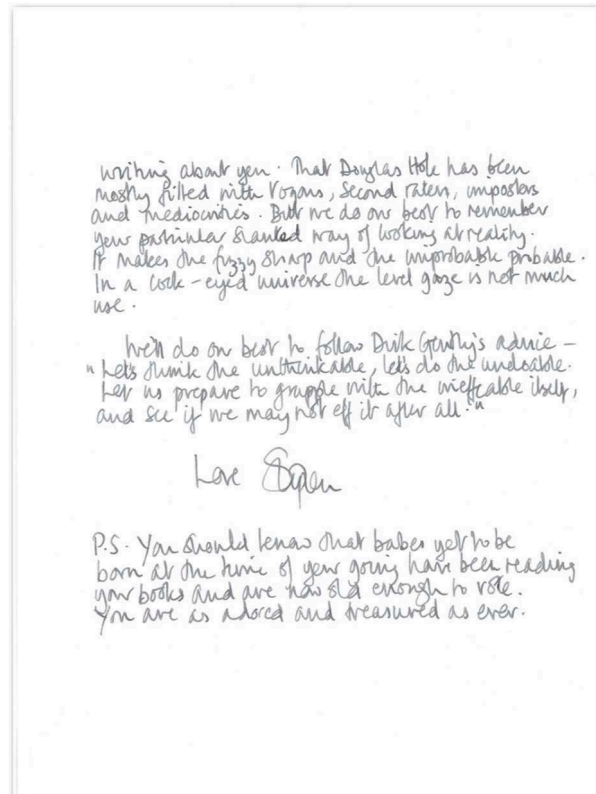
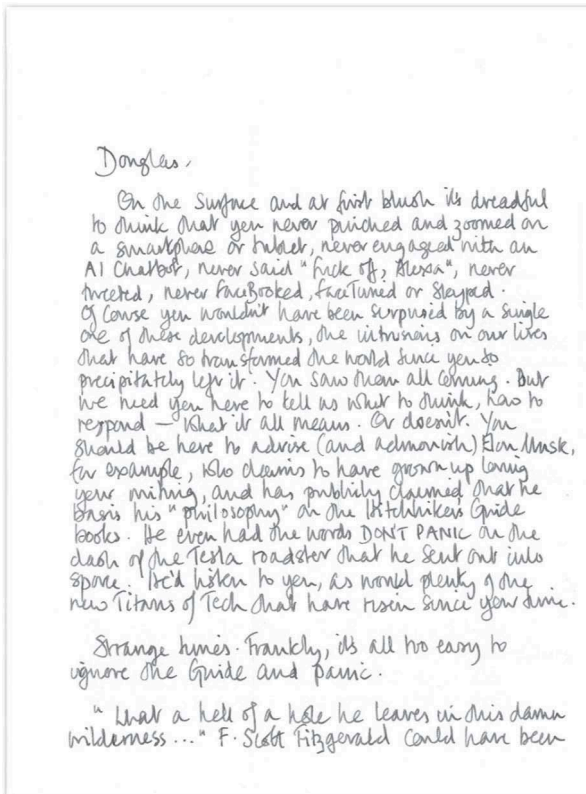
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A Note on the Editor

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Copyright

Foreword by Stephen Fry



Douglas,

On the surface and at first blush it's dreadful to think that you never pinched and zoomed on a smartphone or tablet, never engaged with an AI Chatbot, never said "Fuck off, Alexa", never tweeted, never FaceBooked, FaceTimed or Skyped. Of course, you wouldn't have been surprised by a single one of these developments, the intrusions on our lives that have so transformed the world since you so precipitately left it. You saw them all coming. But we need you here to tell us what to think, how to respond – what it all means. Or doesn't. You should be here to advise (and admonish) Elon Musk, for example, who claims to have grown up loving your writing, and has

publicly claimed that he bases his “philosophy” on the Hitchhiker’s Guide books. He even had the words DON’T PANIC on the dash of the Tesla roadster that he sent out into space. He’d listen to you, as would plenty of the new Titans of Tech that have risen since your time.

Strange times. Frankly, it’s all too easy to ignore the Guide and panic.

“What a hell of a hole he leaves in this damn wilderness...” F. Scott Fitzgerald could have been writing about you. That Douglas Hole has been mostly filled with Vogons, second raters, imposters and mediocrities. But we do our best to remember your particular slanted way of looking at reality. It makes the fizzy sharp and the improbable probable. In a cock-eyed universe the level gaze is not much use.

We’ll do our best to follow Dirk Gently’s advice – “Let’s think the unthinkable, let’s do the undoable. Let us prepare to grapple with the ineffable itself, and see if we may not eff it after all.”

Love Stephen

P.S. You should know that babes yet to be born at the time of your going have been reading your books and are now old enough to vote. You are as adored and treasured as ever.





Stephen Fry is an English polymath: variously an actor, broadcaster, comedian, director, writer and often referred to as a man with 'a brain the size of a planet'. He and Douglas became good friends in the early 1980s, sharing a near-obsessive love for new technology – Douglas was the first to buy an Apple Mac in Europe and Stephen the second. And who better to narrate the audiobook of *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* when it was released in 2012?

Introduction

When Douglas Adams died unexpectedly in 2001, he left behind notebooks and memorabilia spanning his lifetime. They offer insight into his early, schoolboy talent, and provide a fascinating riddle of notes and musings on all his work – from the various incarnations of *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* to the before-his-time wonderings about how technology might bring information to our fingertips and a book on a screen to our hands. They also reveal a frustrated writer, brilliant poet, and self-effacing man (among much else).

Over the last two years, through a pandemic and beyond, Kevin Jon Davies has had unrestricted access to Douglas's personal papers, which the Adams family generously loaned to St John's College, Cambridge (Douglas's alma mater) after Douglas's death. Painstakingly working through every box, paper by paper, Kevin has selected the facsimiles and images of Douglas's notes, jottings, early scripts and thoughts, and photographs, that seem best to capture the spirit and workings of Douglas Adams. To select from such a cornucopia of riches seemed at first an almost impossible task – how to choose when every page, photograph, printout or mere scrap of paper offers some other new insight? How to make sense of some of the most fascinating wonderings without the author himself there to explain them? The result might, in the end, be considered merely a snapshot of a brilliant mind, but, in truth, it is as broad in scope as it is revelatory.

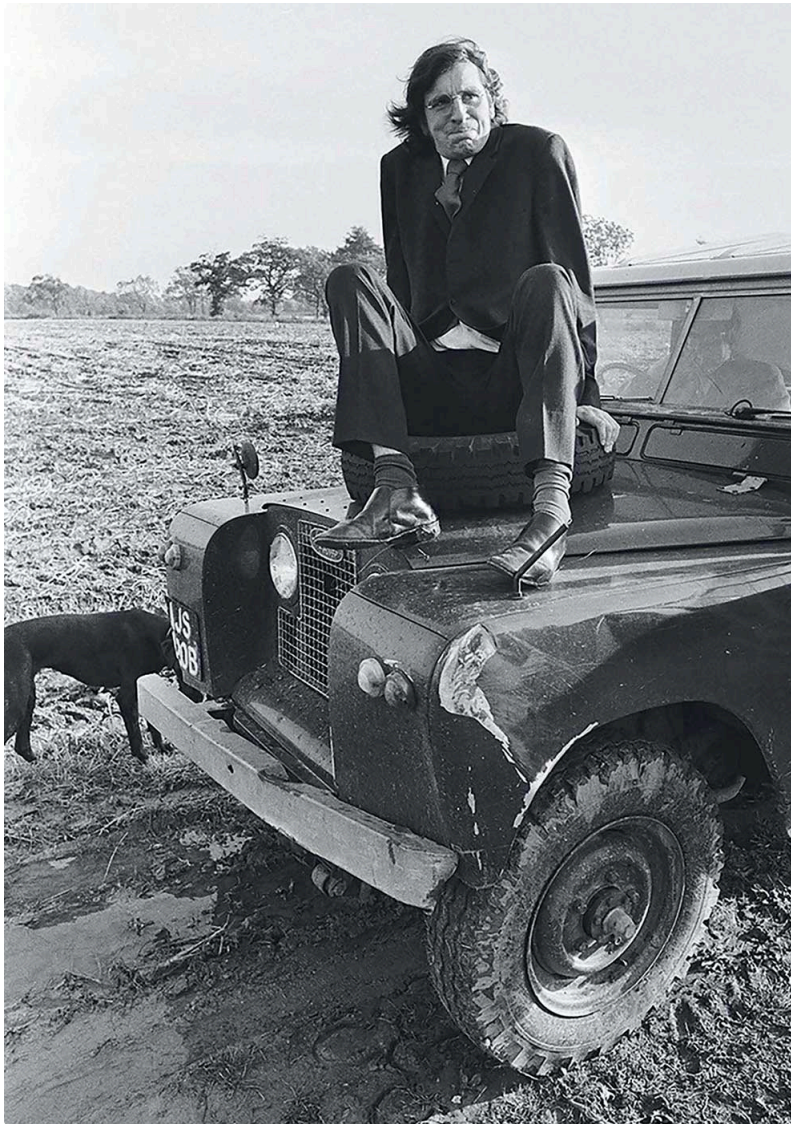
The book is organized along a vague timeline of Douglas's life, beginning with his school days and moving through his university years, early experiences of radio and TV, breakaway fame and fortune, forays into conservation, technology and the digital world, and ending (as all things do) with his death. However, to suggest the book is biographical in any way is to miss the point. Yes, there are plenty of biographical references in the captions, each of which gives

necessary context to the papers and other fascinating discoveries in Douglas's archive. And, through the generosity of his many devoted family, friends and fans, there are further treasures and exclusives that extend beyond the archive material, in order to make sure every branch of Douglas's life is somehow represented in the book. Among these special 'extras' are present-day letters from some of those closest to Douglas. These are intimate thoughts and wishes sent to Douglas now that he is no longer around to hear them first hand. Finally, interspersed 'feature' spreads take the opportunity to highlight specific nuances of Douglas's life and work – his signature, and the inspiration for '42' among them. Overall, then, this book is much less a biography than it is a collection of precious artefacts, brought together to enlighten and inspire and to honour Douglas's remarkable legacy.

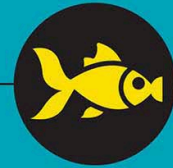
Through the generosity of his many devoted family, friends and fans, there are further insights and exclusives that extend beyond the archive material.



Douglas (centre, top row) in kabuki-style make-up in the Berthold Brecht play *The Good Person of Szechwan*, in which he appeared while at St John's College, Cambridge, and was directed by the writer and broadcaster Sue Limb (see [page 52](#)), who kindly supplied this photograph.



Douglas shivering through a 1973 publicity photoshoot, by Mike Penhaligon.



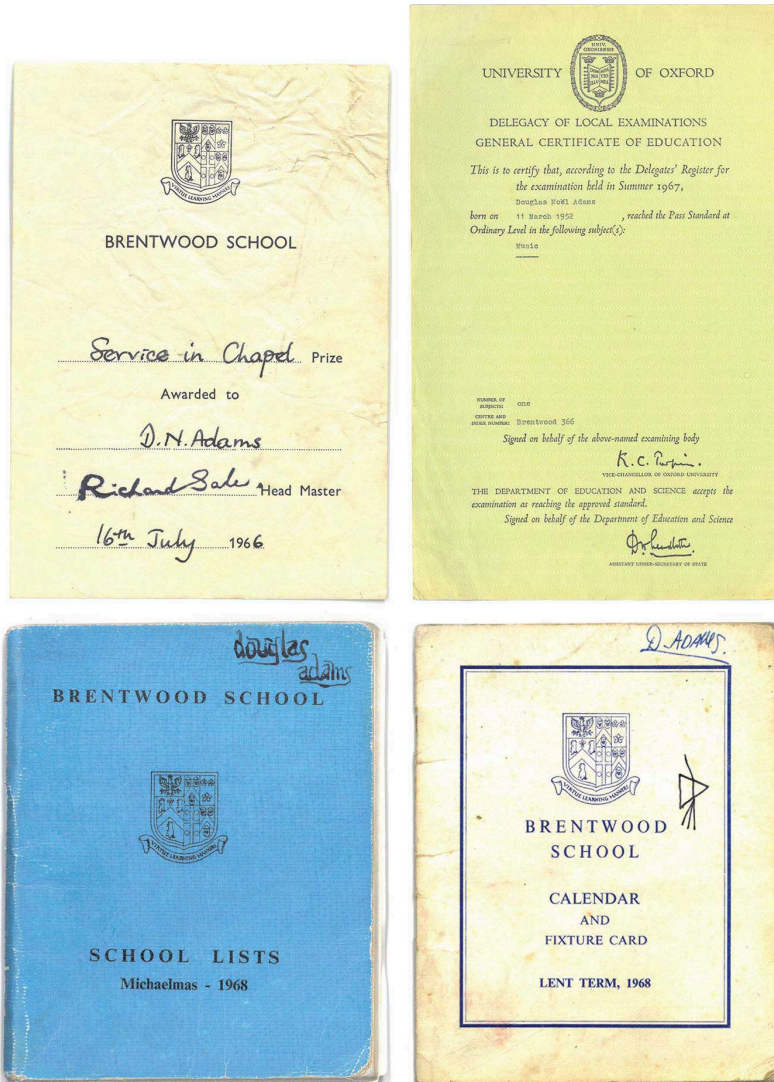
ONE

Early (Talking) Doors



From a young age Douglas Adams showed remarkable talent, as a writer, an artist, an actor, a poet and an orator. This chapter gathers notable memorabilia and work dating from his school years in Essex.

A PROMISING STUDENT



Douglas attended independent boys' school Brentwood for 12 years, starting in the Prep School when his mother moved to Essex after her divorce from his father, until he left in 1970 to go to Cambridge. He was 14 when he received the 'Service in Chapel' certificate (top left) in 1966; and he achieved his Music O'level (top right) the following year. He later described how much he retrospectively appreciated the quality of teaching at the school, particularly, he said, in English and Physics.



School photographs from Brentwood School, taken between 1967 and 1970 (top to bottom). Douglas was always unusually tall for this year and wrote about how troubled he had been that, by the time he was 12, he was not only taller than his fellow students, but also taller than many of his Masters – a uniqueness that was compounded, embarrassingly, by the fact that until he went into the upper school, he was forced to wear short trousers.

Christopher Turquoise had a very cosmopolitan background and cannot be said to be a true citizen of any one country. As an international playboy he moved in fashionable circles, but was determined to prove himself as a literary artist. In his formative years he came under many diversified influences in the form of environment, education and genetics. He was born in Rio de Janeiro, to a British Consul and a Brazilian Artist, from where he moved to Genoa in Italy, where he stayed, being educated by a succession of governesses of various nationalities, till the age of nine.

Thus, from his earliest years he was brought up in the surroundings and tradition of art and culture. At the age of nine his family moved to New York, where he continued to receive private education for a year, until he went to Lincoln Heights High School, a fashionable New York school. After four years there, he spent another four years at Harchester Public School in England, followed by three years at Oxford.

The life of Christopher Turquoise is the story of a definite talent which was led too much by flamboyant aspirations and pretensions

In his second year at Oxford, he published his first book of verse called 'Dead Sea Fruit', which was a failure. He went on however to write a satirical comedy in French by the title of 'Dejeuner aux Enfers', which whilst being well received was not a popular success. In 1936 he published another book of verse with limited success. 1938 also saw his marriage to "the dazzling Sybilla" daughter of a Milanese count, in what was an important society wedding.

With the war in 1939 he joined the R.A.F., and his six years in the Force, along with the death in 1942 of his wife, who was a racing driver, profoundly affected his ideas. His literary works so far, though undoubtedly of literary merit had proved to be neither particularly pre-eminent in the field or popular, and more to the point, lucrative. He began to see that there was no future in his romantic, slightly surrealist poetry, and turned his attention to the popular market, and

in 1945 published “Head of Unknown Woman”, a thriller which quickly entered the best sellers lists. He was immediately invited to the glitter and glory of Hollywood to direct “Desire of My Heart” from his own script. This is a lure he could not resist, and whilst filming was in progress he married secretly the star of the film Desirée Framboise (an English girl, real name Mary Berry).

His next publication was another step even further from his poetic aspirations: a book called “Raff Chaps” which was a selection of doggerel verse satirising the R.A.F. very mildly. It was extremely popular, as was “Suites for Sweeties” a farce produced first in London and two years later on Broadway. In 1947 “Desire of My Heart” was voted ‘Film of The Year’ and awarded two Oscars. Then in 1946, whilst two of his films were in active production, he died following an illness due to his war wounds.

The life of Christopher Turquoise, is the story of a definite talent which was led too much by flamboyant aspirations and pretensions and lured into the bright lights and glitter of popular success. His desire for fame and fashionability probably bred by his cosmopolitanism made him wish to be thought of as ‘arty’ to the detriment of his art. When this failed he exploited his talent rather than nourished it, which dashed him into the hectic life of show business and probably hastened his untimely death.

[Teacher’s mark & comment] A – Good. You do deal with the main problem.



Christopher Turquoise had a very ~~cosmopolitan~~ cosmopolitan background and cannot be said to be a true citizen of any one country. As an international playboy he moved in fashionable circles, but was determined to prove himself as a literary artist. In his formative years he came under many diversified influences in the form of environment, education and genetics. He was born in Rio de Janeiro, to a British Consul and a Brazilian Artist, from ^{where} he moved to Genoa in Italy, where he stayed, being educated by a succession of governesses of various nationalities, till the age of nine. Thus, from his earliest years he was brought up in the surroundings and tradition of art and culture. At the age of nine his family moved to New York, where he continued to receive private education for a year, until he went to Lincoln Heights High School, a fashionable New York School. After four years there, he spent another four years at Harchester Public School in England followed by three years at Oxford. In his second year at Oxford he published his first book of verse called 'Dead Sea Fruit', which was a failure. He went on however to write a satirical comedy in French by the title of 'Dejeuner aux Enfers', which whilst being well received was not a popular success. In 1936 he published another book of verse with limited success.

This undated school essay is a fictional biography of 'Christopher Turquoise', an international playboy and author who (perhaps) wasted his talent and succumbed to an early demise. The facsimile (see [pages 17-19](#)) shows Douglas's handwritten work, including his teacher's final comment. The full essay is transcribed below.

1938 also saw his marriage to "the darling Sybilla" daughter of a Milanese count, in what was an important society wedding.

With the war in 1939 he joined the R.A.F. and his six years in the force profoundly changed his ideas along with the death in 1942 of his wife, who was a racing driver, profoundly affected his ideas. His literary works so far, though undoubtedly of literary merit had proved to be neither particularly pre-eminent in ~~the~~ field or popular, ~~and~~ - more to the point, lucrative. He began to see that there was no future in his romantic, slightly surrealist poetry, and turned his attention to the popular market, and in 1945 published "Head of Unknown Woman", a thriller which quickly entered the best sellers lists. He was immediately invited to the ~~the~~ ^{glitter} ~~glory~~ and glory of Hollywood to direct "Desire of my Heart" from his own script. This a lure he could not resist, and whilst filming was in progress he married secretly the star of the film Desiree Franboise (an English girl, real name Mary Berry).

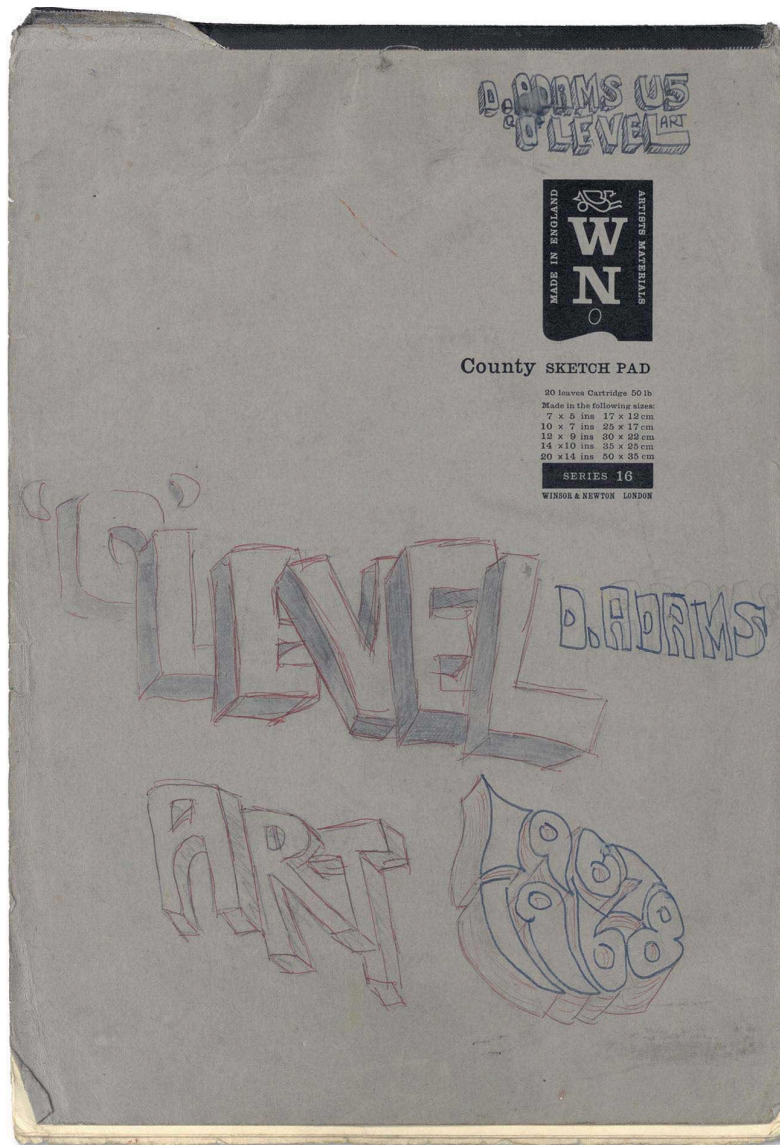
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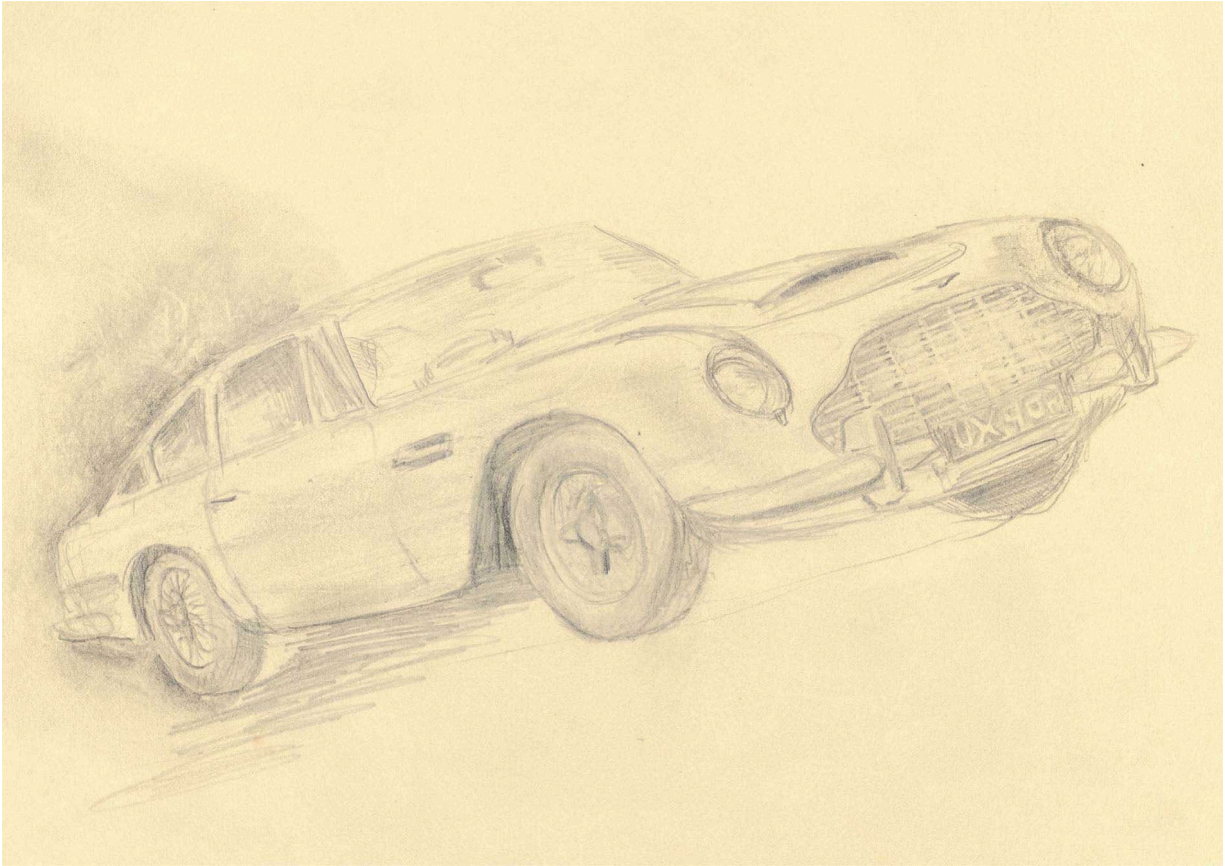
The life of Christopher Turquoise, is the story of a definite talent which was led too much by flamboyant aspirations and pretensions and lured into the bright lights and glitter of popular success. His desire for fame and fashionability probably bred by his cosmopolitanism made him wish to be thought of as 'arty' to the detriment of his art. When this failed he exploited his talent ~~to~~ rather than nourished it which dashed him into the hectic life of show business and probably hastened his untimely death.

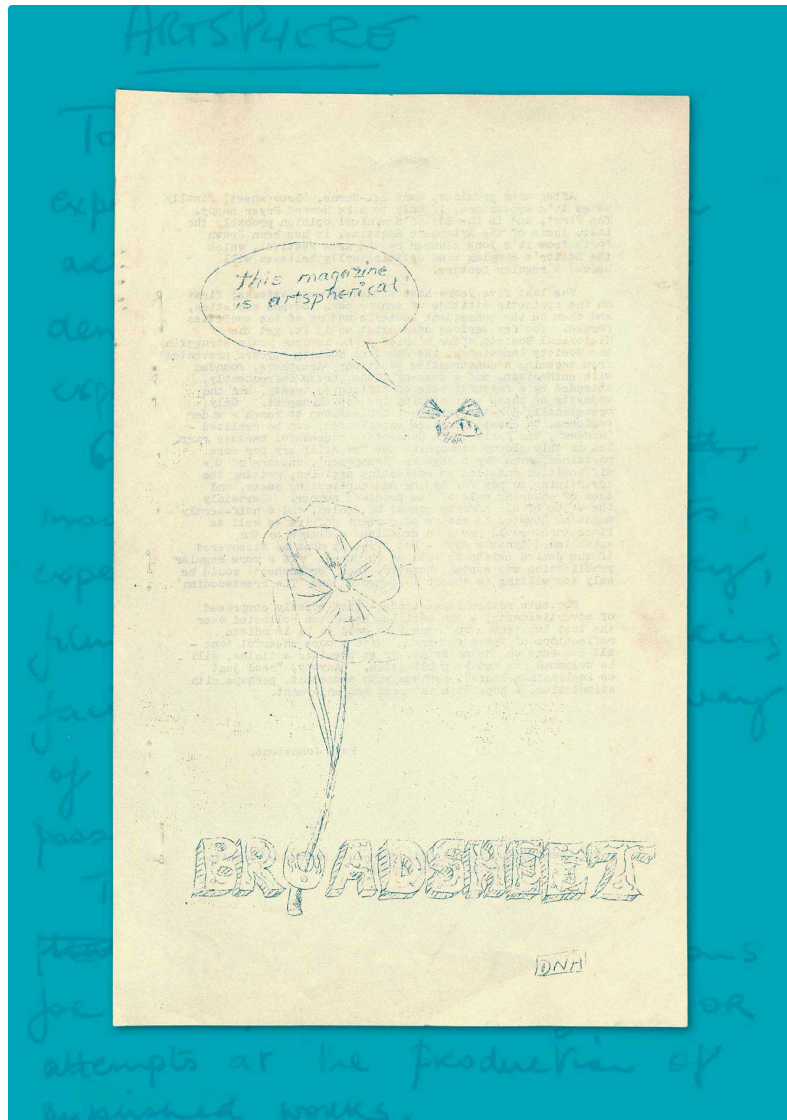
A. Good. You do deal with the main problem.

ART AND EXPRESSION



Douglas decorated his O'level art sketch pad (above) with lettering in the style of hippy posters, and *Hitchhiker* fans will note the significance of finding a teacup and saucer (below, top) among his observational sketches – the very items his hero Arthur Dent would later crave. Douglas's detailed drawing of an Aston Martin (below, bottom) might seem perfectly usual given how preoccupied so many boys were with Sean Connery and James Bond at the time, but Douglas had such a car in the family. His father, by now estranged from his mother and re-married to a wealthy second wife, bought himself one. Douglas's personal papers, held at St John's College, Cambridge, include his collection of Aston Martin sales brochures.





‘Artsphere’ (defined in this handwritten note, below) was the brainchild of young Douglas and his classmates, including Paul Neil Milne Johnstone (of Redbridge), who wrote poetry and served as editor of the only known edition of their mimeographed magazine *Broadsheet*. Douglas drew the simple cover (above) and provided the satirical potted book reviews (below), some of which would not now make it through a sensitivity read. His longer, handwritten piece about a local music concert arrived far too late for inclusion, but opened with Douglas’s first grumble (of many) concerning ‘irate editors clamouring about datelines’. His revenge was well documented by the use, years later, of Johnstone’s name in the earliest versions of *Hitchhiker* as that of the ‘worst poet in the universe’. After some sound legal advice, later editions were

amended to one 'Paula Nancy Millstone Jennings (of Greenbridge)'.

Douglas Adams:

Book Reviews.

- 'HAMLET' - Feeling depressed? Read this account of life before yeastvite and think how lucky you are.
- 'OLIVER TWIST' - Tale unsuitable for those with a social conscience in a starving world: glutton makes good.
- 'TREASURE ISLAND' - Saturday night booze up ends in tears. Cripple gets what cripples deserve. Islands and money smack of a tax avoidance scheme.
- 'ST. JOAN' - Unhappy state of frustrated girl before possibility of sex change operations. All ends happily however. After a barbecue party she has a bedroom scene with a gay king.
- 'LADY CHATTERLY'S LOVER' - Elementary Flower arrangement.
- 'ROMEO AND JULIET' - According to an old wife's tale, a kiss takes 12 seconds off your life expectancy. This couple overdid it.

ARTSPHERE

To provide an outlet for experimental projects in the arts, which at present are denied any opportunity of expression.

Covering such fields as folk, modern music of all sorts, experimental theatre, poetry, film projects etc and enabling facilities for these in the way of a stage, lighting and possibly an audience.

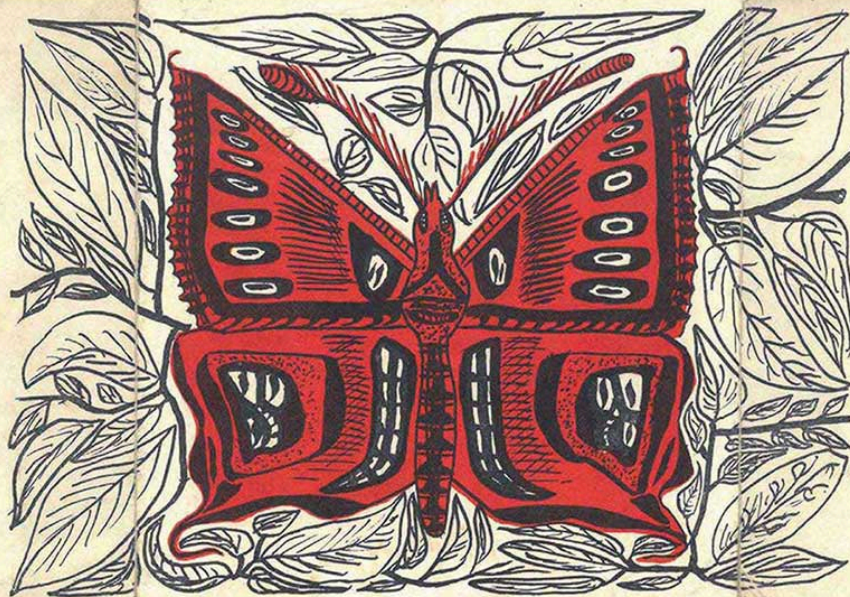
The Committee are ~~very~~ ~~planned~~ open to all suggestions for work, ~~and~~ either original or attempts at the production of published works.





Douglas was always something of a frustrated performer, but in his heyday at Brentwood he played some juicy roles, including the lead in *Julius Caesar* and a 'beanstalk' in a variety concert. The photographs above are from May 1965, when he played a drunken tramp, the lead role in Karel Čapek's *The Insect Play*. Douglas, and other members of the cast, signed the gate-fold souvenir programme (below).

and these
have
smaller
still
to bite 'em
and
so
proceed
ad
infinitem



so
naturalists
observe
a
flea
has
smaller
fleas
that
on
him
prey

BRENTWOOD SCHOOL
The Junior School
presents

THE INSECT PLAY

An Entomological Review
by
THE BROTHERS CAPEK
on
Friday 7th May 1965
Saturday 8th May 1965
at
7.30 p.m.
in
the Memorial Hall.
Producer
D. N. L. Firth Esq.
Costumes and Decor
D. H. Whitfield Esq.
Business Supervisor
C. G. Poole Esq.
Translated from the Czech by
Paul Selva

D.N. Adams

Tramp
Lepidopterist
Clytie
Otto
Victor
Felix
Iris
Chrysalis
Mr. Beetle
Mrs. Beetle
Strange Beetle
Ichneumon Fly
Larva
Mr. Cricket
Mrs. Cricket
Parasite
Blind
Timekeeper
Chief Engineer
2nd Engineer

D. N. Adams
T. R. Lamb
P. N. Sauvary
S. M. Schick
J. K. Jones
J. R. Cherry
A. P. Grieve
D. R. Hartley
R. J. Neary
M. D. Nutt
I. F. Kittle
T. R. Lamb
L. Lewis
P. G. Harland
C. Norton
B. S. Roberts
S. J. Dutton
P. Boddam-Whetham
R. J. Benton

Cast List

Inventor
Messenger
Journalist
Philanthropist
C in C
Yellow Ants
Red Ants
Yellow Ants
Moths
First Snail
Second Snail

A. W. Russell
E. J. Booth
C. G. F. Lovell
A. M. Peters
R. E. Waddingham
D. J. Willis
H. S. Kirk
K. G. Magnay
R. J. Willis
O. C. Box
J. D. Middleditch
P. N. Sauvary
S. M. Schick
J. K. Jones
J. R. Cherry
A. P. Grieve
W. J. Spencer
R. G. Petty

Prologue
Act One
Act Two
Act Three
Epilogue

In the Woods
The Butterflies
Crawlers and
The Ants
Death and Life

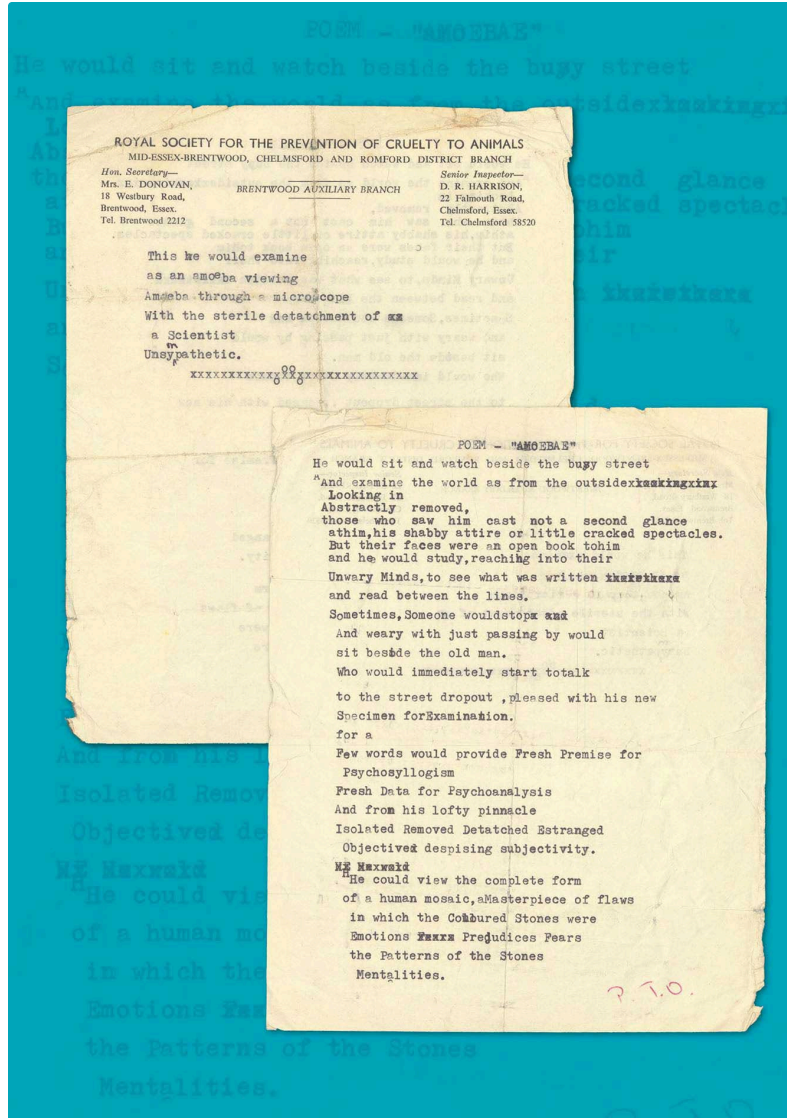
Stage Director J. S. Tilley
Stage Carpenter M. W. Jordan
Lighting Manager N. M. Tarrant
Assistants R. F. Gibb
S. D. Tarrant
Stage Staff B. J. Thorogood
Scenery Painters L. 6 Stage Design
I. S. Croft
F. M. Porter
G. A. Hollingworth
J. K. Evans
D. S. Sanderson
Business Manager C. J. B. White
Programme Cover D. Mann
Prompter P. Grice
Properties R. A. Chisholm
Song set to music by G. H. J. Pooley
Make-up Mrs. B. Hall
Mrs R. Brooks
Mrs. J. Venner

The verse on the front
of the programme is by Dean Swift

We gratefully acknowledge the generous
help given by parents in the making
of the complicated costumes.

There will be two short intervals —
after Act I and Act II.

A YOUNG POET



Douglas's early poems belie his young age. The address at the top of this notepaper, used in reverse (the upper image here is actually the end of the poem that begins in the lower image), reveals that the paper was taken from his maternal grandmother – Mrs E. Donovan, the Honorary Secretary of her local branch of the RSPCA. Douglas was just 12 years old when he wrote the poem below – about a tramp, which someone has subsequently noted was a year before he played a tramp in the school play (see [previous page](#)).

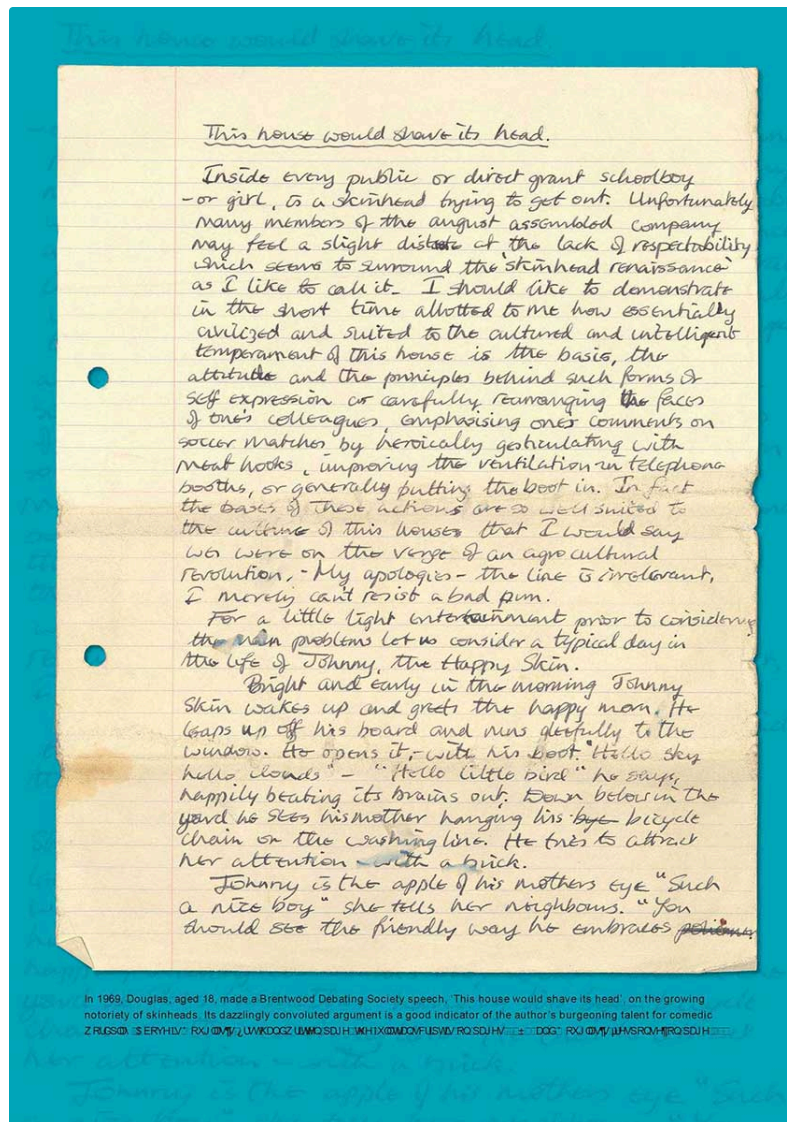
TRAMPS EYE VIEW.

And so, another beauty
Wasted on the man to whom beauty
Was everywhere, around, above, below,
Created by nature. The fragrance, the fragile wonder,
The artist's unattainable goal
Were commonplace and stale
And uselessly irrelevant to him, like ice to an eskimo.
His eyes scanned the horizon,
Unmoved by the emerald and ruby shades of the hills
Glistening with diamond spots of dew.
"Another day," he cursed and spat into
The rippling depths of sapphire that tranquilly
Wound their never ending journey below him.
" Another day, " he cursed again as he saw
The far hill tops glowing
And the messengers of light streaking crimson
Across the azure sky
Heralding the day's rebirth,
The sun's reincarnation:
Fresh light to let man gaze again
On nature's wondrous kingdom.
and yet these golden shafts of light
Were greeted by a common tramp
With sulky curse.

by Douglas N. Adams. aged 12 years

written down without any previous thought.

9 years before the play!



In 1969, Douglas, aged 18, made a Brentwood Debating Society speech, 'This house would shave its head', on the growing notoriety of skinheads. Its dazzlingly convoluted argument is a good indicator of the author's burgeoning talent for comedic wordplay. Above is Douglas's first handwritten page; the full transcript is on [pages 31-2](#), and Douglas's 'response' on [page 33](#).

Inside every public or direct grant schoolboy – or girl, is a skinhead trying to get out. Unfortunately, many members of the august assembled company may feel a slight distaste of the lack of respectability which seems to surround the 'skinhead renaissance' as I like to call it. I should like to

demonstrate in the short time allotted to me how essentially civilized and suited to the cultured and intelligent temperament of this house is the basis, the attitude and the principles behind such forms of self-expression, or carefully rearranging the faces of one's colleagues, emphasising one's comments on soccer matches by heroically gesticulating with meat hooks, improving the ventilation in telephone booths or generally putting the boot in. In fact, the bases of these actions are so well suited to the culture of this house that I would say we were on the verge of an agrocultural revolution. My apologies – the line is irrelevant, I merely can't resist a bad pun.

For a little light entertainment prior to considering the main problems let us consider a typical day in the life of Johnny, the Happy Skin.

Bright and early in the morning Johnny Skin wakes up and greets the happy morn. He leaps up off his board and runs gleefully to the window. He opens it, with his boot. "Hello sky, hello clouds" – "Hello little bird" he says, happily beating its brains out. Down below in the yard he sees his mother hanging his bicycle chain on the washing line. He tries to attract her attention with a brick.

Johnny is the apple of his mother's eye. "Such a nice boy" she tells her neighbours. "You should see the friendly way he embraces policemen."

Johnny, putting on his hobnail bedroom slippers goes to the bathroom for a shave. Undoing his braces, he takes off his pyjamas and puts on his other Levi's. He goes downstairs to break his fast, the mirror, and a couple of his little brother's teeth as he gives him a loving pat on the mouth. He walks down the street playing football with the cat and arrives at school by 9.00. By 9.10 his teacher is unfortunately indisposed, so Johnny returns home, with his satchel full of razors slung over his back.

That afternoon, feeling in need of a little light entertainment to refresh his spirits, he meets some of his acquaintances and they repair to a football ground. Leaving the gatekeeper bleeding happily on the floor, they take their places for the match. By the end of the match many of his friends and others are ... asleep and so they leave them laying where they are, not wishing to disturb them, and

he takes the train home with the remainder of his friends. 'What a nice match,' they all say, and they recreate some of the more exciting moments there in the carriage. 'Let's play a game,' says Johnny, playfully putting his foot through the window. One of his friends swings gleefully around on the communications cord and everyone joins in the general celebrations.

Mr Chairman, I now must turn these notes serious. At the end of the day, he returns to bed tired and strangely happy, having got rid of his pent up frustrations and spleen, bearing no serious grudges or inhibitions, and, ironically at peace with the world. He knows that at no time of the day has he fallen short of his own code of behaviour, for his code allows him to be as honestly and openly prejudiced, pig-headed, and fascist as he likes, and he knows it. He is fully aware that there can be no pretence of right or morality in what he does, and he has nothing to answer to himself for, nothing to turn a blind eye to, his conscience is healthily clear. He does not need to indulge in any of the self-deception that those with a loudly proclaimed morality use to persuade themselves that in all things they are not actually doing anything completely inexcusable. He doesn't seek to excuse himself. He knows that anything he's done that day was done primarily because he wanted to and it gave him a kick. If he hits someone, he doesn't profess self-righteously that he is being cruel to be kind, or that it's for the person's own good. He isn't interested in the other person's own good and wouldn't say so; he doesn't excuse himself by saying that his psychiatrist has prescribed it for the release of his nervous tensions, he did it because he enjoyed indulging his own pig-headed arrogance.

Bright and early in the morning Johnny Skin wakes up and greets the happy morn. He leaps up off his board and runs gleefully to the window. He opens it, with his boot.

The skinhead is an ascetic. His way of life allows no other, his hairstyle is ascetic, his clothes are ascetic, his philosophy is sparse, uncluttered, and beautiful in its simplicity and honesty. He doesn't

hide moral corruption behind a front of prettiness, flowers, incense, howls against hypocrisy and wailings for freedom and self-expression, most of which involves doing what the hippies call 'your own thing'. If the skinheads had been in 144 Piccadilly¹, the result would have been much the same in terms of damage, but they would not have come out hypocritically canting against the moral decadence and prejudice of those who kicked them out of their sordid mess. They now regret what they wanted when they proclaimed universal love was universal sex, and it seems their only contribution in that direction is the dubious idea that it is preferable to make love in a sleeping bag on a road island than in a bed. The hippy movement is more corrupt than the society they rebel against, and more self-deluding if they think they are less so. Name dropping is name dropping whether it concerns titled dignitaries, or an obscure underground group that you can be sure no one else has heard of.

The Skinheads dismiss all forms of cultural pretensions – just listen to Blue Beat² – any form of moral pretension, and, most important any of the craving necessity for self-justification which pervades practically all other strata of society. Britain was once a Christian state. It can hardly claim to be so now. I am not here to applaud or deplore that fact, but to deplore the legacy of the wane. In the days of widely professed Christianity, it was the concern of everybody to live a life of conformity as much as possible to the forms of Christianity, or at least, and more important, appearing that way. To be wrong, or to behave according to anything less than the highest principles was to be guilty of a sin, and this was to be avoided at all costs, with the result that the most dubious actions had to be justified and excused both to one's colleagues, and to oneself. Now Christian standards are largely dismissed, they are regarded as outmoded – but still people must justify themselves – they have a quaking social terror of admitting either to themselves or anybody else that something they intend to do or have done – and would do again in similar circumstances – was wrong. Even to say, 'Everybody else does it so there's no harm in my doing it', or 'It wasn't my idea,' is cringing, self-justifying the inability to recognize that you are in the wrong and glad of it.

Even the Satanist, whose code is deliberately evil, seeks to justify himself by ascribing transcendental significance to his base instincts, to put it on to some acceptable footing. Only the Skinhead is honest enough to say I'm bad because it suits me, and that is something that a member of a post-Christian society must realize – it is something for a Christian society to realize – if you are going to be in the wrong, don't pay the homage of vice to virtue which is hypocrisy. Don't pretend you are basically deep-down virtuous.

Skinheads, in their dress, way of life and morals are ascetics. They allow themselves no comfortable moral code to which they can twist their motives to fit in.

Monks, in their dress, way of life and morals are ascetics. They allow themselves no comfortable short cuts which they can twist their moral code to fit in with, and they have no illusions about themselves. The monk, with his shaven tonsure is as uncompromising as the Skinhead. He doesn't pretend to himself that he finds a life of strict morality easy, but he dismisses his wants and desires because they do not fit with the moral code he has set himself. The Skinheads have no illusions about themselves – they know that they are not moral – and they dismiss a moral code because it does not fit in with what they want and are going to do in any case.

What is there between the two shaven-headed extremes? There is ordinary society which refuses to admit that their day-to-day standards and professed moral code cannot co-exist and insist on trying to twist both in an attempt to make them fit to their own satisfaction and ultimate self-delusion. The hippies fall between every stool in sight – they aim at the uncorrupted spiritual purity of the monk without his devotion and application and achieve the decadence of the Skinhead without his honesty.

Mr Chairman, I won't insult the intelligence of the committee of which I am a member by suggesting that this nation is primarily concerned with hairdos. Neither will I insult the intelligence of the house as the opposition will no doubt do, by suggesting the committee would put on a debate with a conclusion as forgone as one discussing the desirability of meathooks and smashed up railway carriages would be. This motion is concerned with an attitude

of mind, and I ask that no-one will be so misguided as to stand up and say that actually they like smashed up railway carriages and are very interested in meathooks and hope to carry a serious motion that way.

A vote in the 'aye' lobby is not a pledge to literally go and crop your hair, but a rejection of hypocrisy, and the realisation of a new self-awareness. The light vein of my opening will, I hope, not detract from the seriousness of the idea I put before you.

I urge the house to be as Skinheads and monks – crop and shave yourselves of all delusions about your apparent selfless actions. Either accept a moral code wholeheartedly, or do what you will, and be sufficiently self-aware and sure of yourself not to need to pay insincere lip service to any form of morality and thus attempt to salve your conscience.

Mr Chairman, I urge the house to be capable of being wholeheartedly, honestly, healthily in the wrong without pandering to your conscience, if you are going to be wrong in any case.

I urge the house to shave its head.



Mr Robinson, in demonstrating his virtual
deceit and little else has attempted to cloud
the whole issue before us, I hope not successfully.
He has first reduced it to a bare exposition
of the merits of various heresies - I warned
you we was out to wanton your intelligence.
(We do not need the auspicious occasion of a
meeting of the Debating Society to discuss
such a matter

It then seems to be under the misconception that I was advising and proclaiming a lack of individuality, and ~~also~~ an army of literally diabolical minds. That is the unfortunate result of two ~~the~~ practices of preparing one's attack on a speech before one has heard. The Dents are ~~very~~ unfortunately misplaced. It is not a profession of non-individuality - it is the ~~simplest~~ expression of the individuality of the person who can be right or wrong and know which he is. To quote my article

Brooklyn
His speech
indicates
his lack of
argument
not ours.

I would remind the house, that a vote in the 'yo' lobby is a rejection of hypocritical self defense, nothing to be wrong when you are wrong. Cultural wrappings to do anything else.

short cropped hair, out merely the ~~of~~ altitude of honesty, but having found their speech irrelevant still bored the house with it.

Once Douglas had made his case and the opposition had made theirs, he was of course required to make a response, presumably in the moment. Douglas cuts down his opposers with what we can imagine was a dismissive wave of the hand: 'To hell I say with Dr Boddam-Whetham. The brevity of his speech indicates his lack of argument, not ours,' he writes. Dr Boddam-Whetham refers to either Paul or Peter Boddam-Whetham, who were fellow pupils, and also in drama productions, sharing a stage with Douglas.

Dear Douglas

MARGO BUCHANAN

Dear Douglas

Hello. I've been dreaming about you quite a bit lately, it's great. You're looking increasingly younger these days.

To be given actual permission to sit here like a loonie spiritual medium and talk to you properly feels like a gift.

Well, we might as well start by going back to when you left.

It was around 9.30 on a Friday evening, we were watching TV when the phone rang. Jane, calling from America, in an eerily calm voice (which transpired to be shock) explained that you had died suddenly at the gym. Massive heart attack.

Horrendously for your mum, she was on a plane on her way to visit you. Your family had to be informed before it hit the news networks and our job was to beat the clock. Thank goodness Twitter wasn't around.

Of course, I don't have to explain Twitter to you, because you'd already foreseen social media years before it actually happened. (You'd have at least 83 million followers on Twitter, by the way.)

Your friends closed ranks around your heartbroken family. We became a small army, all still friends today. I feel like I'm speaking on behalf of all of them here.

We were all dreading that first Christmas because of the famed Christmas Carol evenings you and Jane hosted. So we decided we had to carry on just as if you were there.

We dressed up to the nines. The champagne flowed; it was the start to Christmas for us all, for quite a few years.

Those Carol nights sustained us for the awful task of having to live a very long time without you.

You'd created a social hub at Duncan Terrace where the most interesting people gathered. I still treasure the conversations. I had more light bulb moments in one dinner at yours than I probably ever

have in 5 years of normal life. Ping! Ping! Ping! Exhilarating. I can remember Terry Jones, about 20 years ago saying that democracy was knackered. I thought he was bonkers. What did I know?

9/11 reinforced my sense of loss. I think I realised that not just your family and friends needed you here, but the whole world could have done with your clever brain on News Night. You just saw things others didn't. God, I wished I'd bought those Apple shares you kept banging on about.

You were such a kind friend, Douglas. We were all expectant parents at the same time. Your baby was due in June, ours in April. We lost our baby late in pregnancy, a terrible time. I confided to you that I'd do anything to avoid new-born babies, bordering on agoraphobic really.

Then Polly was born.

We came to meet her at Duncan Terrace. Your mum was there with the whole family and the atmosphere was like a gentle party. No time to think, you sat me firmly onto a comfy chair and put a sleeping Polly straight into my arms. It was exactly like they describe in books. The room melted away and it was just her and me. I eventually looked around and the room was empty. You'd all left me with your tiny, precious, fragile two-day-old little scrap and the process of healing began.

You clever, clever, clever man.

Happier times! What about the night we arranged for us to play at Duncan Terrace?

The audience was collectively more famous than the band (not counting the mega famous Rock-God David Gilmour and your beloved Gary Brooker). Melvyn Bragg, George Martin, Lenny Henry, Terry Gilliam, Angus Deayton, Salman Rushdie, Mariella Frostrup, Kathy Lette – too many more to name.

Microsoft Billionaire Paul Alan flew over especially in his brand new Boeing 757. Unexpectedly, I saw a friend from Seattle. 'Paul Alan gave me a lift,' she said, like it was a Ford Fiesta.

We really did have the best of times. You packed in quite a life Douglas. It was a real one, with highs and lows, but it was a good one.

If there is an after-life, I'm certain you'll be there at the gate to meet me. And, my atheist friend, I will SO take the piss. I always told you to hedge your bets and be an agnostic.

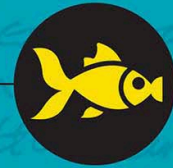
I am very glad this book is being written to celebrate you. There are many people who will write about your brilliant brain and your incredible sense of humour. I want your readers to know about your brilliant heart too.

We'd laugh at that, wouldn't we? 'Obviously not that bloody brilliant,' we'd say. I miss you, my darling friend.

Love, M x



Margo Buchanan is a Scottish singer-songwriter. She has worked with everyone from the Pet Shop Boys to Deep Purple, Joni Mitchell and Tina Turner to Van Morrison. She met Douglas as a result of a Paul McCartney concert – her husband Paul ‘Wix’ Wickens was performing and Douglas realized he and Wix had shared a childhood music teacher. This photo shows Margo singing at one of Douglas’s legendary music parties.

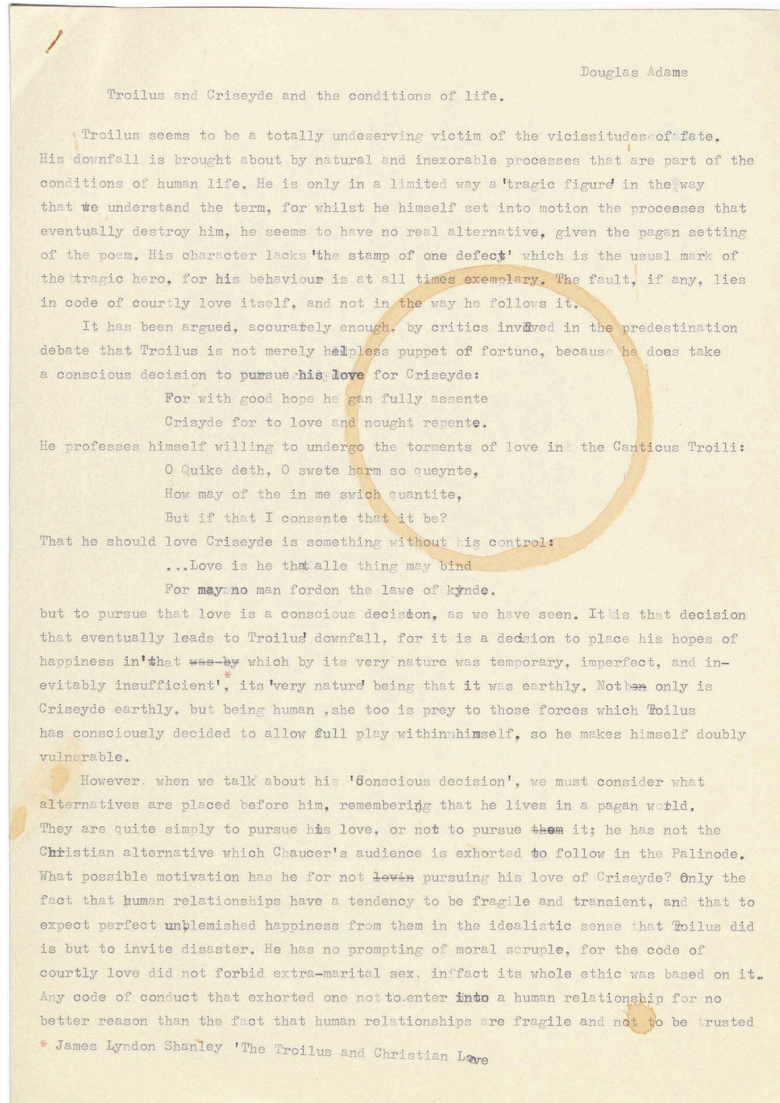


TWO Cambridge Life

<i>D Adams</i> name — nom — nombre — name DOUGLAS NOEL ADAMS <i>Linnets, Grove Lane STURGEON DORSET</i> address — adresse — dirección — address BRITISH nationality — nationalité — nacionalidad — staatsangehörigkeit <i>11.3.52</i> date of birth — date de naissance — fecha de nacimiento — geburtsdatum CAMBRIDGE ENGLAND place of birth — lieu de naissance — lugar de nacimiento — geburtsort <i>Douglas Adams</i> signature — signature — firma — unterschrift The National Union of Students of England, Wales and Northern Ireland <i>Jack Straw.</i> President		 Field of study Etudiant en estudiant de studienfach ENGLISH year of study année d'étude año de estudio studienjahr 70/71 educational institution établissement establecimiento de enseñanza err der hochschule BRENTWOOD SCHOOL address rue & dirección hochschulstr. INGRAM RD, BRENTWOOD ESSEX. ENGLAND	This membership card is issued by the National Union of Students, which is a large, active, influential union and which exists to fight for the interests of its 450,000 Members. It operates nationally, negotiating with, and campaigning against, Government, College and Local Authorities. It operates locally in support of member unions, or individual students in dispute or difficulty. NUS's enviable reputation for being well-informed stems from the continuous work done by the Education and Welfare, and International, departments who provide the briefings for negotiating teams, Conference, policy-making, debates, and advice and help on individual student problems. The Press Office exists to communicate student views to the mass media. NUS Travel provides students with reduced rate travel by plane, train or boat, and Endsleigh Insurances specialises in negotiating reduced rates and special terms for students in all classes of insurance. This card must be validated here to certify that the holder is a scholar member of the National Union of Students of England, Wales and Northern Ireland. 1970/71 <i>MOBatham</i>
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In December 1970 Douglas discovered he'd earned himself an exhibition place to study English at St John's College, Cambridge. From among his personal papers is his student union card, signed by Jack Straw, then a senior at Brentwood School and later to become one of the UK's leading Labour Party politicians. It's clear also that Cambridge was a catalyst for Douglas's talent, with Footlights, Cambridge's legendary drama society, a prominent feature.

ACADEMIA



Douglas was fond of claiming he wrote only a couple of essays while at university, as he was far too busy honing his skills as a writer and performer at Footlights. His archives, however, tell a different story, proving that, in fact, he did a good deal of work. This essay explores the notion of love in Geoffrey Chaucer's epic poem *Troilus and Criseyde*.

which did not at the same time offer an alternative is a dry inhuman one, that would certainly receive little support from Chaucer. It would reduce life to an arid emotional desert/^{would} which even preclude Christian love when that alternative came to be offered.

So there seems to be little reason for Troilus to resist 'the lawe of kynde', and we must look to see what reasons, apart from the obvious, there are for him to follow it. First, by falling in love he is following the wishes of one of his major gods, Cupid. In the pagan context, his very act of falling in love with Criseyde may be caused deliberately by Cupid, as a retribution for ~~Troilus~~ Troilus's scorn of lovers. By obeying his wishes he is therefore obeying the highest authority he knows. Similarly, by following the teachings of courtly love he is following the highest moral code of which he is aware, and adhering to it absolutely. We are encouraged to think by this that the alternative with which he is not presented, that of divine Christian love, is the one to which he most naturally inclines. If we now look forward to the palinode we see how important these few final verses are to the thought of the poem. They no longer appear, as they have done to some critics as a 'pious afterthought', or an apologia or cop-out, but a very necessary conclusion. What Chaucer has tried to show to his audience is that life for its own sake, and human values for their own sake are transitory and that if we try to invest ~~ourselves~~ in them what we naturally need to invest of ourselves in the Christian God, we will not find satisfaction. In other words he considers the circumstances of human life to be impossible; ^{we need the} third alternative.

This suggests that Troilus's love for Criseyde is really frustrated love for God. Criseyde gets Troilus on the rebound, so to speak. From Chaucer's point of view, what Troilus loves is God-in-her, in accordance with the Platonic theory of Universals. If, as that theory states, everyone is an imperfect reflection of God, then it is natural that Troilus should fall in love with the most perfect woman in Troy, i.e. the least imperfect reflection of God. This explains the obsessive nature of his idealism, for ^{he} attributes qualities to her that are godlike rather than human. With the ideal of courtly love to encourage him he expects love ~~to be~~ to be eternal, and he dwells at length on the quasi-religious quality of sexual experience. He does not realise that eternity is ~~impossible~~ an impossible ideal in earthly terms, and the nearest he gets to experience of eternity is the experience of the eternal present moment: in the love making scene neither Troilus nor the narrator make any reference to the future and its tragedy. -Troilus enjoys a few hours of 'eternal' bliss.

Significantly, Troilus chooses to follow those Gods and ideals that most nearly approximate ~~the~~ to those of Christianity. Cupid is the God of love, and is the only god before the Christian one to whom the ~~quality~~ quality of love is central, and the code of courtly love is the only code other than Christianity which is also based on love. However, Cupid is pre-Christian, and courtly love is post Christian. By transposing the convention back to pre-Christian times Chaucer shows that he thinks it to be a poor non-divine substitute for Christianity, and not compatible with Christianity.

itself, for the very reason that it attributed divine qualities to human beings, and directed love due to God to human beings, who were incapable of meeting its demands. The rigour of the demands of courtly love, its emphasis on purity, faithfulness, and eternity are pseudoChristian, and as such are commendable ideals for pre-Christians but⁴⁹ for Christians. It is for this reason that Chaucer is able to celebrate so unequivocally the love of Troilus and Criseyde when he is telling the story, - for Troilus behaves remarkably well for someone living in a world in which the conditions of life are impossibly arbitrary, - and later, in the palinode, talking directly to his audience, to speak of 'payehs corsed olde rites', and 'wreched worldly appetites'. For Troilus they were the closest possible approximations to Christianity, but for Chaucers audience they are merely perversions of it. So too, as far as Troilus is concerned the world is all that exists, and so he takes all that happens extraordinarily seriously until after his death, when he is able to laugh at it. A Christian on the other hand should see it as merely a pale reflection, and a distorted one at that, of the kingdom of heaven, and be aware of the 'false worldes ~~beitiennesse~~ brotelnesse'.

Without doubting Chaucer's sincerity, we may notice that Chaucer sounds more convincing when he is celebrating human life than when he is denigrating it, but nevertheless we cannot doubt that the palinode is the inevitable conclusion of the story that Chaucer tells. He sees that the conditions of human life are intolerable through their arbitrary transience, and that all the decisions of life need an alternative that transcends^{the} uncertainty of earthly values.



Right: One of several headshots of Douglas as a student that exist among his personal papers.

Introduction

Introduction

The knowledge that this work was composed within the walls of a lunatic asylum easily prejudices our initial reaction to it. William Force Stead, its first editor¹ saw it as an incoherent confusion of deranged erudition, tempered by occasional glimpses of brilliant and lucid sanity. It was only after W.H.Bond's discovery of its antiphonal structure² that it began to be recognised as something more important - a fragment of a failed literary experiment, gigantic, perhaps bizarre, eventually out of control, but nevertheless the product of a coherent and rational idea - the transplantation of the rhythms and structures of Hebrew poetry into an English religious poem.³ We will never know the nature or full extent of Smart's madness, or indeed if he was mad at all. Dr Johnson has doubts:

'Madness frequently discovers itself by an unnecessary deviation from the usual modes of the world. My poor friend Smart shewed the disturbance of his mind, by falling down on his knees and saying his prayers in the street or in any other unusual place. Now, although rationally speaking it is greater madness not to pray at all than to pray as Smart did, I am afraid there are so many who do not pray, that their understanding is not called into question'

In studying this poem I decided to treat it as being fundamentally sane, and by giving the benefit of the doubt to a number of passages previously dismissed as chaotic and meaningless often arrived at readings I considered coherent both in themselves and in the context of the whole.

Over the following pages is part of Douglas's final dissertation. The essay investigates Christopher Smart's religious poem 'Jubilate Agno' (or 'Rejoice in the Lamb'), written during Smart's confinement in an asylum. A letter dated 27 June 1974 from Douglas's personal tutor, K.J. Pascoe, indicates that the essay earned Douglas a high 2:1 – although the correspondence also gives news that he failed his tragedy paper, and his other papers were middle-ground 2:2s.

('Let man and beast appear before him
and magnify his name together' (JA, A3)⁹)

The whole of created life (and later inanimate creation) is summoned by Smart to worship and bless God in pairs of man and beast. Stead divides these verses into three separate categories:

- 1) Those in which there is some obvious connection between the pair, such as Abraham and the Ram, Balaam and the Ass, Daniel and the Lion.
- 2) Those in which the connection is more obscure - Aaron and the Bull (see Ex. Chap 32 v. 8), Anah and the Mule (Genesis 36 v. 24, AV, not RV), Naphtali and the hind (Gen. 49 v. 21)
- 3) Those in which the connection is apparently arbitrary and meaningless, such as Eleazer and the Ermine, which is not mentioned in the Bible, Ahitub and the Ape, Moses and the Lizard (which is pronounced unclean in Lev 11,v.30) Stead suggests that these arbitrary connections are simply the product of Smart's deranged imagination, but this is a judgment we should beware of. Smart's learning was phenomenally wide and many connections may not be apparent to us through their sheer obscurity. Verse A57 is a case in point:

'Let Anna bless with the Cat, who is worthy to be presented before the throne of grace when he has trampled upon the idol in his prank' Stead and Bond dismissed this verse as meaningless, noting that the cat is mentioned nowhere in the Bible. Later, C.Devlin pointed out that in the apocryphal book Baruch there is a mocking description of the Babylonian idols which has this verse:

'Upon their bodies and heads sit bats swallows and birds, and the cats also' Smart's verse suggests that he is aware of the fact that the cat is not strictly Biblical, but that its action here makes it worthy of inclusion.

But why is it that Smart summons pairs of men and animals together?

the cat is not strictly Biblical, but that its action here makes
worthy of inclusion.

John Ray (in *The Wisdom of God in Creation*, 1735), referring to the apparent inability of animals and inanimate objects to actively praise God says:

'All that they are capable of doing is affording matter or subject of praising him to rational and intelligent beings.'⁶

Bond remarks that Smart wished to bring the whole of creation together in praising God, and since he regarded animals below the level of man as being incapable of appreciating the creator, he invariably summoned them to praise, not directly but through some human intermediary. The theme of animals instructing men in praise of the creator has precedent in Smart's poetry, for instance in this Seatonian Prize Poem of his Cambridge career:

'Woeful vicissitude! When Man, fall'n Man
Who first from Heav'n, from Gracious God himself
Learn'd knowledge of the Brutes, must know, by Brutes
Instructed and reproach'd, the scale of being;
By slow degrees from lowly step ascend
And trace omniscience up towards the springs.'

The simplest statement of this idea in the *Jubilate Agno* is to be found at Bl 68,⁴ in which Smart enrols himself in the list of those called to give worship:

'For I am possessed of a cat, surpassing in beauty, from whom I take occasion to
bless Almighty God.'

I believe that a similar idea is expressed in verse A 52:

'Let Elihu bless with the Tortoise, which is food for praise and thanksgiving'
Both Stead and Bond find this verse hard to explain, saying that the Tortoise is unfit to eat, being pronounced unclean in Lev 11, v.29. I suggest that what Smart means here is that though the tortoise is unfit to eat, yet it still affords inspiration for the praise of God, as in the modern metaphor 'food for Thought'

Often Smart takes the notion of 'food for thought' directly and derives from the nature of the animal cited a brief homily, after the example of commonplace books or, more aptly, after the example of Solomon (*Go to the ant, thou sluggard, consider her ways*). Here are some examples:

'Let Job bless with the Worm- the life of the Lord is in humiliation, the Spirit

also and the Truth' (A 51)

'Let Zadok worship with the Mole - before honour is humility, and he that looketh low shall learn' (A 54)

'Let Huldah bless with the silkworm - the ornaments of the proud are from the bowells of their betters' (A 91)

'Let Iddo praise the Lord with the Moth - the writings of man perish as the garment, but the Book of the Lord endureth for ever' (A 68)

But Smart is not always so coldly didactic in his references to the world's livestock. He combined enormous knowledge of theoretical natural history, learnt from the pages of Pliny and others, with a deep compassion for all animals, without which, Jubilate Agno would probably not have been written. The two following examples give some indication of this and also begin to hint at something that will later become very clear - that Smart's conception of the hierarchy of creation goes very far above and beyond the idea quoted above from John Ray.

'Let Joseph, who from the abundance of his blessing may spare to him that lacketh praise with the crocodile, which is pleasant and pure when interpreted, though his look is of terror and offence' (A 46)

'Let Lemuel bless with the wolf, which is a dog without a master, but the Lord hears his cries and feeds him in the desert' (A 76)

In these verses, and in many others, the animals are given a life of their own, and in the second case it is made clear that the wolf is existing and being in a relationship with God that is totally isolated from Man. The Toad, too, is called 'the good creature of God, tho' his virtue is in the secret and his mention is not made' (i.e. in the Bible - Smart was fully aware that not all his creatures were Biblical, though he says that 'all the creatures mentioned by Pliny are somewhere or other extant to the Glory of God!').

At the end of fragment B2 we come to the only passage in this poem which can claim to be reasonably well-known. This is partly because it is popularly believed to be the only part which makes sense, and partly because it takes the form of an extraordinarily vivid description of the nature and movement of a cat. It is also radical to the thought of the poem.

'For I will consider my Cat Jeoffry'

From this opening we might be led to expect some extended Solomonic Homily to follow, of the type we have already seen, so the following line comes as a complete surprise, until we see that it clinches the suspicions aroused by the crocodile, wolf and toad verses.

'For he is the creature of the living God, duly and daily serving him'

Smart has moved right away from contemporary belief, and here places a 'sub-human' creature, his cat, alongside man in the hierarchy of creation. In fact he sees Jeoffry as being a far more devout Christian than the majority of Smart's contemporaries managed to be (see Doctor Johnson, above):

'For at the first glance of the glory of God in the East he worships in his way.'

(JA. B2 699)

But how on earth does a cat perform an act of worship?

'For this is done by weaving his body seven times round with elegant quickness'

This line is the beginning of a highly stylised and idiosyncratic catalogue of the movements of the cat. Smart defines the nature of the cat by a process of synthesis: one simple detail is added to another and another, and this brings us closer and closer to a grasp of what we might call 'cat-ness':

'For thirdly he works it upon stretch with the forepaws extended.

For fourthly he sharpens his paws by wood.

For fifthly he washes himself.

For sixthly he rolls upon wash

For seventhly he fleas himself that he may not be interrupted upon the beat.

For eighthly he rubs himself against a post.' (JA 707- 712)

Eventually the collection of his external characteristics becomes an expression of his inner nature, or as Smart says elsewhere (JA C 80)

'For there is stupendous evidence of the communicating of God in externals.'

It is the exercise and fulfilment of that inner nature that is seen as being in some sense worship of God: God has 'blest him in the variety of his movements', so he worships in return 'in his way by weaving his body seven times round with elegant quickness'. (JA B2 699-700)

The ideas that Smart uses here prompt me to make an unusual digression by comparing them with those of another religious poet who was writing a century later - Gerard

Manley Hopkins, who is 'always intent on examining that unified complex of characteristics which constitute the outward reflection of the inner nature of a thing - its individual essence...Very often this is for Hopkins the fundamental beauty which is the active principle of all true being, the source of all true knowledge and delight - even of religious ecstasy: for speaking of a bluebell he says "I know the beauty of the Lord by it"...As a name for that 'individually-distinctive' form (made up of various sense data) which constitute that rich and revealing 'beingness' of the natural object, he coined the word 'inscape'; and for that energy of being by which all things are upheld, for that natural (and ultimately supernatural) stress which determines an inscape and keeps it in being - for that he coined the word 'instress' ⁷

Despite the anachronism involved I think we can accurately and conveniently use the terms 'inscape' and 'instress' in defining Smart's ideas: the 'inscape' of Geoffrey or any other created being is in its outward manifestations an expression of God's creation, and of his continued sustaining power, his spirit or 'instress' in creation. This is fully defined in the text if we combine verses B2 699-700 (quoted above) with these two verses:

'For God has blessed him in the variety of his movements' (B2 765)

'For the divine spirit comes about his body to sustain it in compleat cat' (B2 744)

Elsewhere we find this example of inscape in a sort of shorthand form:

'For a man speaks HIMSELF from the crown of his head to the sole of his feet'

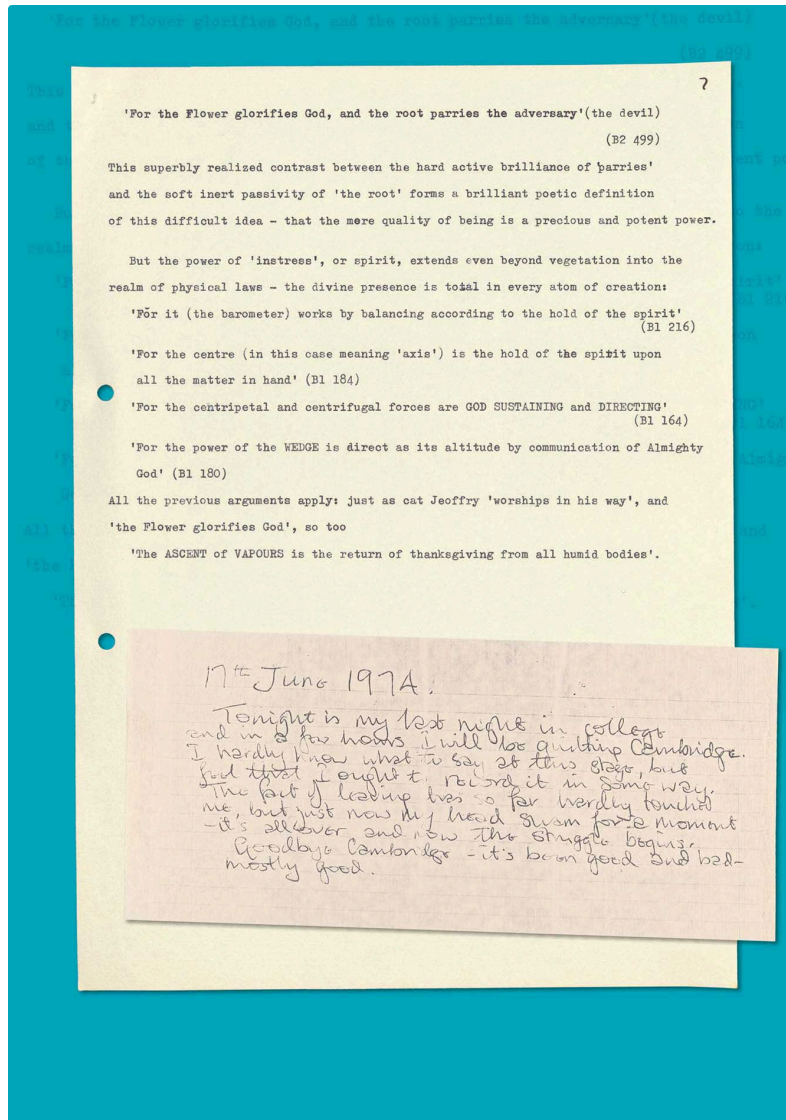
'For the LION roars HIMSELF compleat from head to tail' (JA B1 228-9)

Here the speaking and roaring are the outward expression of the 'inscape' - HIMSELF. The energy of 'instress' is derived from God's being, and it is therefore, according to Smart, a positive force of good:

'For he (Geoffrey) counteracts the powers of darkness by his electrical skin and glaring eyes'

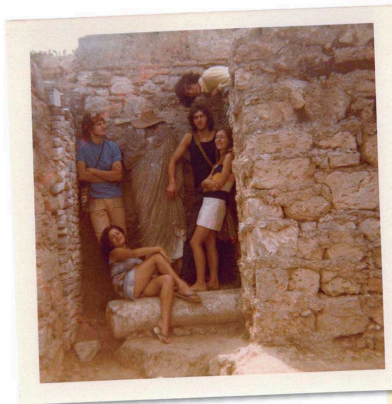
'For he counteracts the devil, who is death, by brisking about the life' (B2 721-2)

That this power extends even to inanimate things is shown by the following verse, to my mind one of the most striking and vivid images in a poem which abounds in strange and brilliant insights:



Douglas graduated in 1974, and evidently left College on 18 June: '17th June 1974. Tonight is my last night in college and in a few hours I will be quitting Cambridge. ... Goodbye Cambridge - it's been good and bad - mostly good.'

FRIENDS AND MUSIC



Of course, it wasn't all academia and societies. Douglas also found plenty of time to socialize. The photograph (top) shows him far left in black tie, with friends, at the St John's College May Ball in 1972 (pop legend Shakin' Stevens was on the bill for this event). And he ended his first year with a campervan road trip across Europe. These photographs capture him in Greece – standing far left in a statue alcove, and on the beach, with snorkel, mask, harpoon and fish!

I have at long last acquired a stereo set, and, having been around knocking ^{on} ~~of~~ on people's doors like the Spanish Inquisition and collecting up my record collection from the far corners of Cambridge I sat down, and clapped the phones to my head and rediscovered life. For the last eighteen months I have been listening to odd snatches of my records on other people's systems in the gaps in other people's conversations - "Listen to this bit" "Which bit?" "The bit you just missed" "Oh. That. Hows the play getting on?" "The bit that pivots and swings round the augmented triad like a planet at the extremity of its parabola and then sweeps slowly back into that bittersweet major seventh like a man who's just realized that his secret attempt to leave his wife is going to fail

like all the others..." "Excuse me... there's Paul, must speak to him..." It was all rather like catching glimpses of an old and very dear girlfriend through the crowd and never quite getting to talk to her, and no-one else even knows you've met before. Now I can get her in a corner all to myself and say what about it and she says God I thought you'd never ask, - and it all wells up inside in a warm flood of knowing that life can be good again - and it is.

It's almost too insensitive plunge in again straight away, so first I played through the new Solih recording of Ludwig's Ninth, - I revelled in the way he keeps you waiting for the drums in the second movement, fills you up, and just before you feel

Music was a huge part of Douglas's life and - as the later evidence of his preoccupation with gadgetry will show - he was particularly intrigued by sound equipment. It's perhaps not surprising, then, that he was delighted when he finally owned his own record deck and no longer had to rely on other students to listen to his precious vinyl collection.

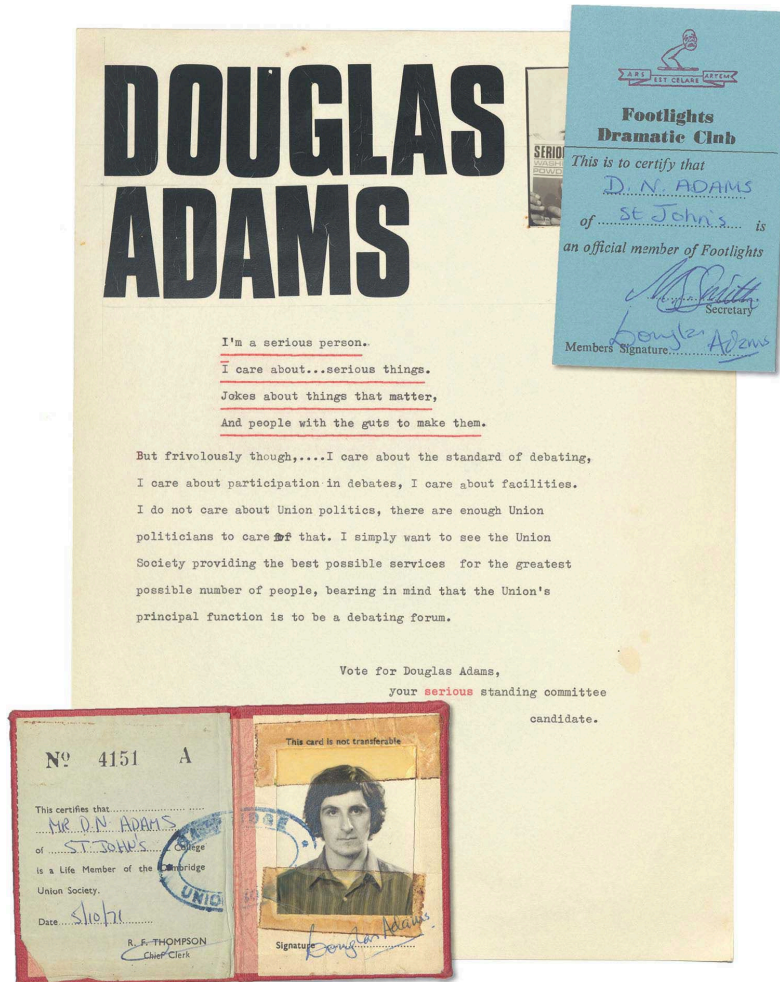
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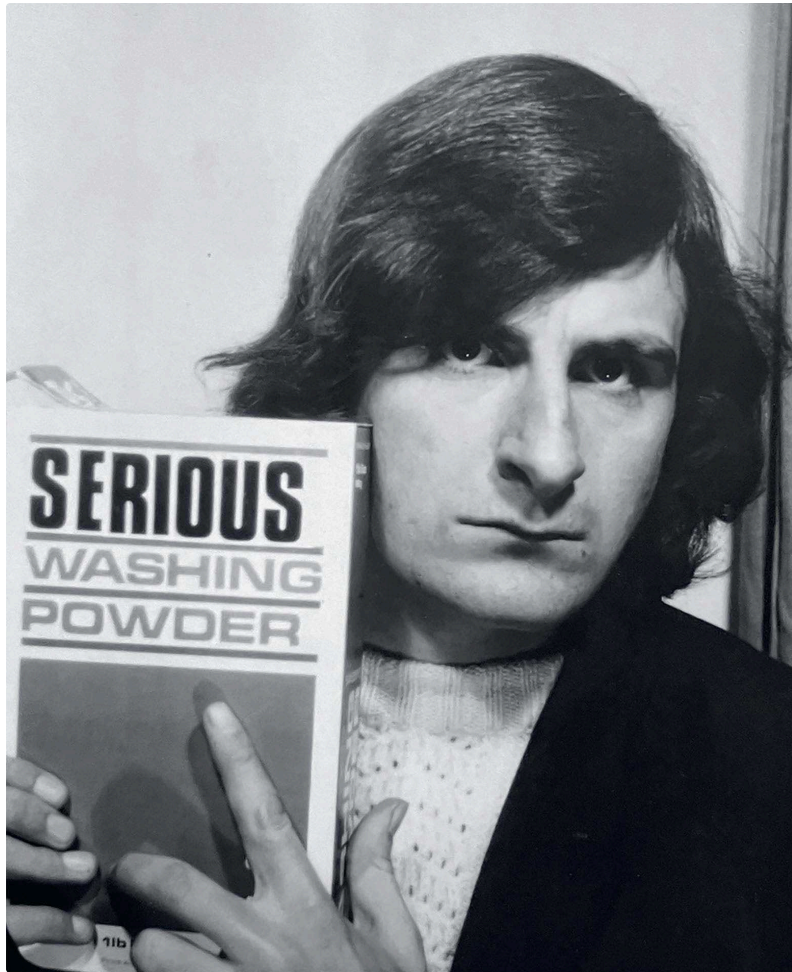
seventh attempt to leave his wife is going to fail like all the others...”
“Excuse me... there’s Paul, must speak to him...” It was all rather like catching glimpses of an old and very dear girlfriend through the crowd and never quite getting to talk to her, – and no-one else even knows you’ve met before. Now I can get her in a corner all to myself and say what about it and she says God I thought you’d never ask, and it all wells up inside in a warm flood of knowing that life can be good again – and it is.



VOTE DOUGLAS

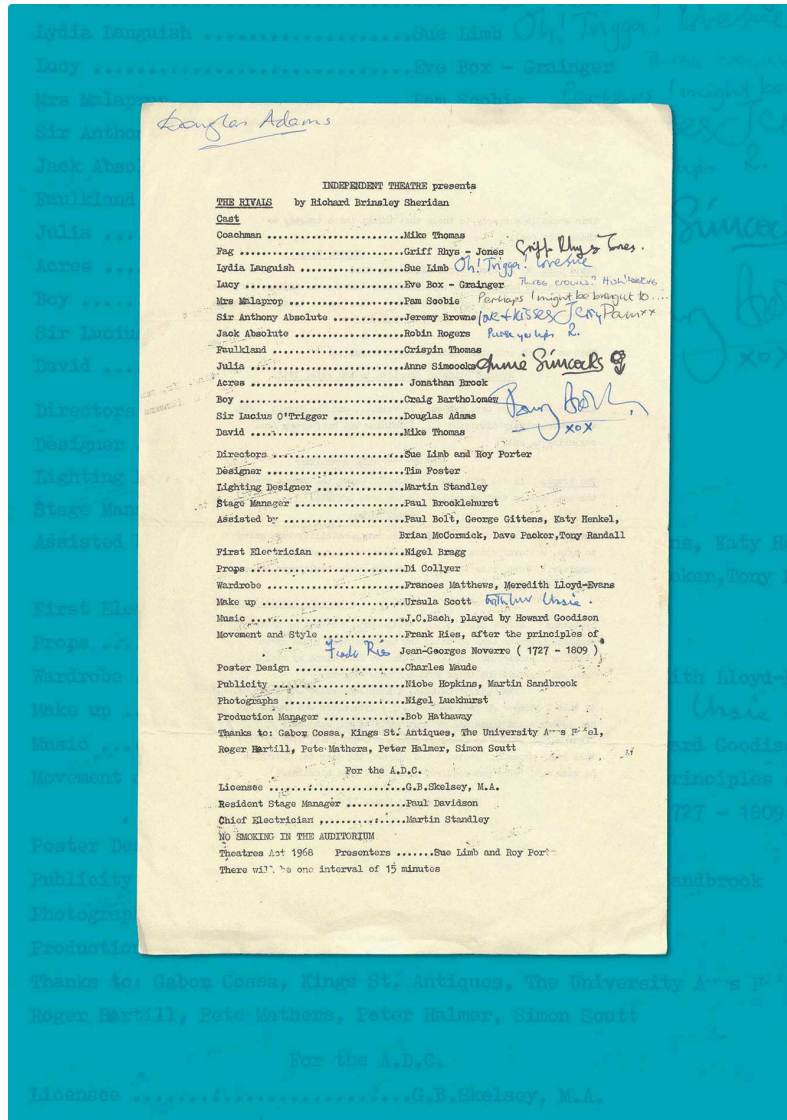


Douglas went up to Cambridge in late 1971 and made a beeline for Footlights, where his hero John Cleese and many others had honed their comedy skills. The club didn't accept direct applications, but committee member Simon Jones (later to create the role of Arthur Dent in *Hitchhiker's Guide*) recognized Douglas had something to offer and elected him to membership in February 1972. But Footlights wasn't all: Douglas plunged into everything that the extracurricular student life had to offer. He joined the Student Union and CULES (a drama club), served on committees, acted in plays and wrote for student magazines.



Douglas used this image – himself holding a mocked-up box of a fictional ‘Serious’ washing powder – to promote his ‘serious’ candidacy for the Student Union’s standing committee (above).

'SMOKERS' & REVUES



A 'smoker' or 'smoking concert' was an antiquated title for an evening of stand-up, sketch comedy and music. Academics by day and performers by night, the students listed in the crudely mimeographed programmes (above and below) include names destined to become famous – among them, producer John Lloyd, chat-show host Clive Anderson, writer Sue Limb, and actors Geoff McGivern, Griff Rhys Jones and Rory McGrath.

eta From Strangers (Trotter/Fowley) Allen, George Gittens,
 ch Enoch (Levene) Lloyd-Evans, Benton, Browne, Fowley,
 ion To Meet You (W. Adams/Smith) Levene, Su
 17. xi. 72.
 L.S.O. IN FLAMES -a smoking concert chaired by Sue Limb
 and Jeremy Browne.

FIRST HALF.

1 Sweets From Strangers (Trotter/Fowley)	Allen, George Gittens, Lloyd-Evans, Benton, Browne, Fowley.
2 Enoch Enoch (Levene)	Levene.
3 Police To Meet You (W. Adams/Smith)	W. Adams, Smith.
4 The Serious Sketch (D. Adams)	D. Adams.
5 Teenagers (Canter)	Dirkin, Canter.
6 Canteen Stakes (Lloyd/Burridge)	Lloyd.
7 Christmas Quarrel (Downes/Taylor)	Downes, Taylor.
8 The Missing Punchline (Young)	Young.
9 It's A Rip-Off (Jennens/Parry)	Jennens, Limb, Jonathan Hotreed, Browne, Parry.
10 Sonnet (Trotter/Fowley)	Allen.
11 Messing About In The Fiver (David Moss)	David Moss.
12 Modern Studies (Browne)	Limb, Browne.
13 Diary Of A Lunatic (Lloyd)	Lloyd.
14 Famous Five (Holmes)	Limb, Allen, Fairhead, Holmes, Lloyd, Burridge, Browne.
15 Cowes (Benton)	Benton.
16 Necrophilia (Taylor/Fowley)	Downes and the Diggers, Fowley.

SECOND HALF

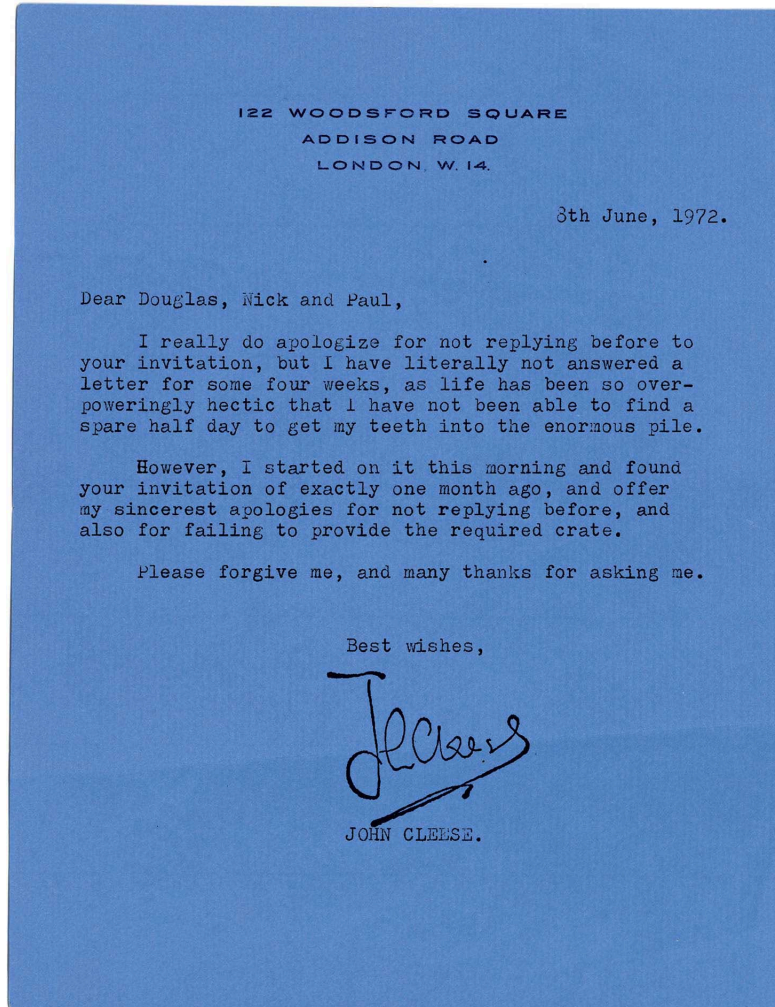
17 Which Way? (Browne)	Allen, Browne and the Boys Next Door, Hirst.
18 The Manager (Canter)	Canter.
19 Enoch Enoch (Levene)	Levene.
20 Enoch Enoch (Levene)	Levene.



Mr. Benton's nostrils by Wig Creations
 Miss Limb's wig by Percy Thrower
 Flowers by Request

These photographs are just highlights from Douglas's acting exploits at university. Left shows him in 1973 playing Lucius O'Trigger in Sheridan's *The Rivals* (1973). According to the *Guardian's* theatre critic Michael Grosvenor Myer, Douglas made this truculent character 'believable, resisting the temptation to caricature'. Next to it is a photograph of Douglas on location for *Pick Up a Milkman*, a spoof Ken Russell film and a celebrated contribution to the May Week revue *Norman Ruins* in 1972.

MEETING JOHN CLEESE



Douglas and friends boldly invited star of *Monty Python* (and former Footlights member) John Cleese to come and see their show *Norman Ruins* in June 1972, for which they received a polite, written late apology (above). A chance meeting with Cleese a year or so later, though, prompted Douglas to ask him for an interview for the student newspaper *Varsity*, which Cleese accepted.

Dear Sue,

I've been trying desperately to get in touch with you this evening.

I've had a long standing arrangement to interview John Cleese for this term for some paper. I was in touch with him this evening and he offered to be available tomorrow (Friday) or not again for a few weeks. I tried to get in touch with you to ask for a dispensation but was not able to find you, so eventually phoned back and said O.K. I do hope very much that this doesn't muck you about - I was quite prepared to put it off if you asked me, but I didn't want to let the opportunity pass

without ~~you~~ a try.

I hope my absence won't be disastrous, and I'm heartily sorry for the inconvenience with love,

Douglas,

Typically, the date and time of John Cleese's availability for interview clashed with one of Douglas's rehearsal commitments. This is a letter he sent to writer and producer Sue Limb to ask (somewhat retrospectively, and not for want of trying otherwise) for her permission to be excused.

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I hope my absence won't be disastrous, and I'm heartily sorry for the inconvenience With love,

Douglas

PUTTING ON A SHOW

FRUTTIN' IN STREATHAM

Impossible without: oxygen, lungs, sweat glands, food, sweat glands, the reproductive system, several pieces of paper, a certain sum of money - and us, without whom the cast would have been different.

CAST: Martin Smith - played by - DOUGLAS ADAMS
Stefanie Singer - played by - MARTIN SMITH
Rachel Hood - played by - WILL ADAMS
Will Adams - played by - STEFANIE SINGER
Douglas Adams - played by - RACHEL HOOD

SCRIPTS by: Adams - Smith - Adams

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL from: John Parry, Jon Carter
Jerry Brown, John Cleese

We're not certain who the pianist is. Ask him after the show. He'll probably say yes.

Thanks to Jim Besley and John Fasnidge for turning electricity into noise and light.

The house was managed by Nick Burton. Look around for him, he'll be the one who isn't laughing.
The stage will be managed.

If you don't enjoy this revue, you certainly won't enjoy
'A BIG HAND ON YOUR OPENING' at Trinity Theatre -
14th & 15th June (twice nightly).

'EVERY PACKET CARRIES A GOVERNMENT HEALTH WARNING'
The Footlights Revue at the Arts Theatre, which is on for
ages and ages.

By the time you've read the opposite page you'll probably be feeling restive and wondering when the show will start. Well it should start at the exact moment that you read the first word of the next sentence. If it hasn't started yet, you're reading too fast. If it still hasn't started you're reading much too fast, and we can recommend our own book 'How to Impair Your Reading Ability', written and published by Adams-Smith-Adams. With the aid of this slim volume you will find that your reading powers shrink to practically nothing within a very short space of time. The more you read the slower you get. Theoretically you will never get to the end which makes it the best value book you will ever have bought. It may be that you are already familiar with this work and are still struggling with the first sentence of this programme, in which case this particular bit is not aimed specifically at you as you will probably never get to read this far, and you will be wondering what it is on this side of the page that is engrossing everyone around you - that is, assuming the show hasn't started yet, which, we must admit, it probably hasn't. We will however be ready very soon, so we suggest that you go back to the top of the page and start reading it again, only slower this time. Should you get bored there's another bit you can read on the back of the programme.

AN ADAMS*SMITH*ADAMS PRODUCTION PRESENTED BY LADY MARGARET AND INDEPENDENT THEATRE

TEDEOUS PERSONAL TRIVIA

WILL ADAMS sports a head which he got as a free gift with several gallons of petrol. It's interior is abysmal chaos and his ears are held on to it with bacon rind. His favourite colour is beyond the visible light spectrum and his hobby consists of dropping toe nail cuttings down organ pipes.

MARTIN SMITH is extremely stupid, but not one of your ordinary run of the mill idiots because he often talks to lizards and calls them soft names. His favourite colour may turn out to be either red or green when he has learnt to distinguish between them, and he is in no way connected with the Poulson affair.

DOUGLAS ADAMS is a complete idiot, and if he wanted to shoot his brains out he would have to aim very carefully. He likes linoleum and hopes to set up a barber shop for cats. He quite likes some people, but on the whole prefers things. He dislikes most colours pretty much, but will admit to a slight leaning towards British Paint Standard 2033 when pushed very hard.

MARGARET THOMAS is getting fed up with the improper advances that are continually made to her by the other three, all of whom are deeply and tragically in love with her. They are often to be seen offering her tokens of their affection - dried cockroaches tied up in ribbon, bits of paper smeared with gum and back copies of the Farmer and Stockbreeder. On a clear day it is just possible to discern which of the three she detests the most.

Cast in the order which will cause the least argument:

WILL ADAMS
MARTIN SMITH
DOUGLAS ADAMS
MARGARET THOMAS

Cast in a slightly more provocative order:

MARGARET THOMAS
DOUGLAS ADAMS
MARTIN SMITH
WILL ADAMS

Cast in the sort of order that leads to civil war:

DOUGLAS ADAMS
MARGARET THOMAS
WILL ADAMS
MARTIN SMITH

STAGE MANAGER: A friend of somebody's sister.

HOUSE MANAGER: Kevin McT.

Publicity Machines: Geoff 'Angst' McGovern, Giles Raymond

Photos: Mike Cotton

Sound: John Fasnidge Violin: Andy Thurston

Light: Jim Besley Someone else: A.W.Other

Words and Music: Director: Tony Root
Adams Smith Adams.

Additional Material: John Lloyd.

Script advice: Otto

Mr Adams' (D) pelvis by Yeovil District Hospital

The shape of Mr Smith's feet by Start-Rite

Mr Adams' (W) disposition by Toast-Vite

Douglas joined his friends Martin Smith and Will Adams in a comedy writer-performer troupe called Adams-Smith-Adams for sketch shows, including *Several Poor Players Strutting and Fretting* in summer 1973 (yellow programme, top), and *A Patter of Tiny Minds* (bottom) in November of the same year.

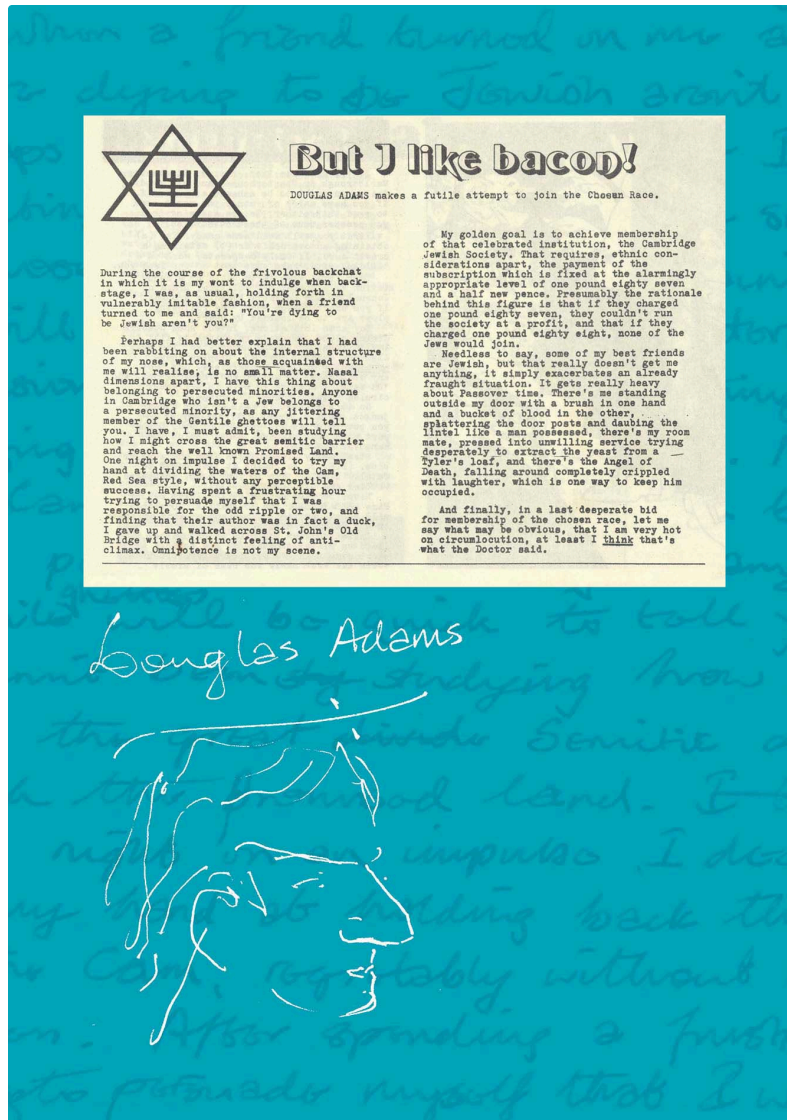


DRAMATIS PERSONAE	CINDERELLA A STUNNER/MIA	CREDITS
Hidewoo (a villain) Simon Leaver A Fairy (Godmother) Jane Palmer Cinderella (formerly Ella) Jane Elliot Baron Kipper (her father) Clive Anderson Baroness Kipper (her step-mother) Marianne Downes Anastasia Kipper Jon Carter Leticia Kipper Jeremy Browne Her step-sisters Buttons (a page boy) Robin Rogers King Groovy (a monarch) Douglas Adams Dandel (his herald) Clive Pinto Prince Charming (his son) Frank Roe Foggina (the prince's tutor) Andrew Frogge A mistake Will Adams Another mistake Martin Smith A Chorus Robert Damon Chris Edwards Edward Gibbs George Dittens Robert Clement Jones Giles Raymond John Stroud Sue Alford Pam Alexander Clare Guber Cora Giverson Rose Griffiths Caroline Hirsch	DIRECTOR Nigel Thomas MUSICAL DIRECTOR Nigel Hess DESIGNER Simon Aggle CHOREOGRAPHERS Jenny Arnold Frank Roe Jeremy Browne with Jon Carter SCRIPT Nigel Hess MUSIC No. Twenty MUSICAL ASSISTANT Alex Ingram HARRY AND THE LAMMETTA FOURTEEN Keyboardists Nigel Hess Lesel Gutter John Porter Rhythm Guitar/Flute Richard Cooper Bass Paul Marsh Cornet and effects Graham Lough Drums Rimbold Treaschmaster Strings Nigel Antony Charles Barnett Veronica Chapar Robin Ireland Clifford Rose Andrew Thornton Andrew Utley Paul White William Yates FOR THE ADC THEATRE Licencees G.B. Skelley M.A. Manager R.M. Harrell M.A. Caretaker Mr. Albert Bishop	PRESENTERS Amateur Dramatic Club Footlights Dramatic Club Original Theatre PRODUCTION MANAGER Antony Rose PRODUCTION ASSISTANTS Gary Green Giles Raymond STAGE MANAGER Roger Syford TECHNICAL ADVISOR Richard Thomas EFFECTS Sue Colwell LIGHTING DESIGN Nigel Bragg LIGHTING OPERATORS David King Brian McCormick Martin Stanbury WARDROBE Deborah Bartlett Marianne Downes Jill Daine Sara Fadden Emma Kyrle-Pope Isobel Morris Cindy Rose PROPS Dora Cresset Frances Wallen STAGE CREW Paul Brockmhurst Chris Cuffin Paul Davidson Eileen Davies Pete Edwards John Gibbons Jack Lang David Parker Tony Randall PHOTOGRAPHS Richard Jewell Nigel Lockhurst Pete Mathers SOUND John Crangston MAKE UP Ursula Scott GLITTER F.M. Woodworth

There will be one interval of twenty minutes.
The audience is requested not to smoke in the Auditorium.

Douglas took to the stage as King Groovy (top) in the Footlights Christmas pantomime *Cinderella* in 1973. The show came complete with gatefold programme (bottom) reproduced on unmissable yellow paper. Comedy writer and broadcaster (and former barrister) Clive Anderson was also among the cast – playing Baron Kipper, Cinderella's hapless father.

ARTICLES



Douglas flexed his writing skills with reviews of his friends' dramatic presentations and other amusing items. 'But I like bacon' came from a short-lived student rag called *OHO!* (subtitled *The Cambridge Lampoon* after its more famous Harvard namesake, *The Harvard Lampoon*). The schoolboy talent Douglas had demonstrated for art was exercised in his doodles, too – this self portrait (bottom left) appears on the cover of one of his notebooks.

With the Footlights club rooms in Falcon Yard off Petty Cury under threat from the property developers, Douglas addressed the problem in this typed article (below).

What's so funny about architecture?

I am informed by those I employ to read the University press for me that someone has thought of a new college, which will not only combine two entirely different types of people inside its walls but also stands a good chance of being called Sherrington College. I have never heard of anyone called Sherrington, and I wonder whether he is either some learned old scholar whose name is mentioned in low whispers in the corridors of Caius, or whether he is merely the previous owner of a large sum of money. Either way, it seems that the council has plans for the proposed site. It feels that a car park is more in line with the image of modern streamlined Cambridge. It has pointed out accurately if insensitively, that at the moment there are more Colleges than car parks in Cambridge. I am assured that this new construction would be called 'Municipal Car Park, Cambridge', and that it will have more lavatories than the whole of second court St. John's put together. I am a little hazy as to the identity of Municipal. Perhaps he is a benefactor who hopes that even if his son doesn't get into the University, then at least he'll be assured of a job. Perhaps the name is an ingenious pun on the word 'munificent' a la Auric Gold-finger. Perhaps the council is having a little joke at the expense of Cambridge architects, who knows? In fairness to the council it should be remembered that a car park will form a far more durable monument to the 20th century than a college. It will prove particularly useful in a few years time when the tourists flock in to inspect the ruins of Fitzwilliam, and when Spike Milligan brings a BBC camera crew down to do a programme on New Court Christ's. Other exciting excursions for the thrill-hungry tourists will include a tour of A staircase Cripps by bathyscape and a trip to New Hall to see exactly why a hydraulic ram is needed to force the food down the girls' throats.

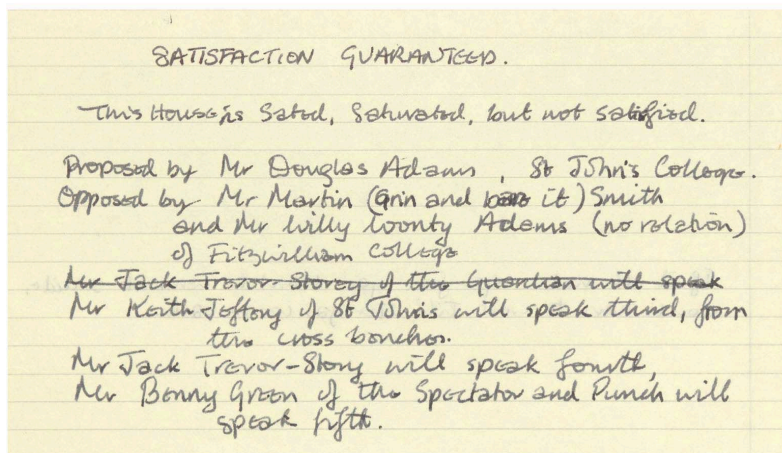
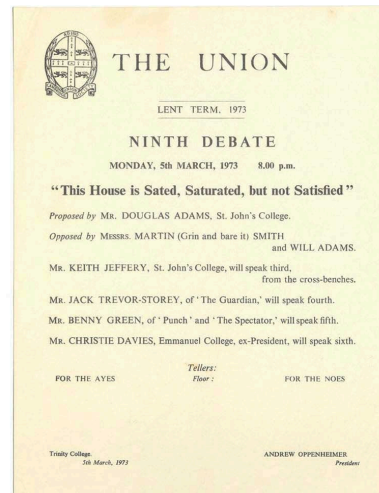
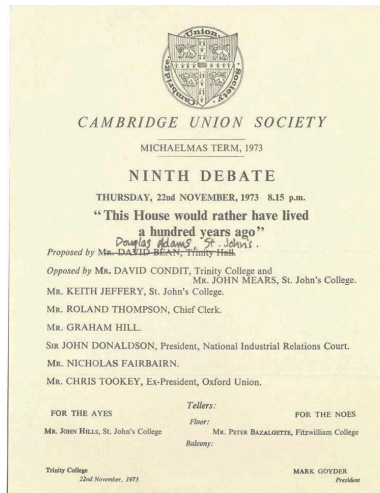
Anyway, a new college will be built somewhere, God Bless her and all who fail in her. Whoever Sherrington is I'm glad that it will be called after him, even if a lot of Americans will turn up expecting to find one of their fine hotels (they won't be put off by the architecture I bet). I'm glad because it shows a certain originality on the part of whichever sub-committee it is that is responsible for naming new colleges. They really surpassed themselves with 'New Hall', an ingeniously subtle variation on 'New College' which Oxford in its learned and imaginative wisdom had already thought of. I was a little worried that after pulling off that particular christening coup, they might sit back on their laurels and call the college 'Another New Hall/College'. One understands the dilemma; at least I do. The 'Religious Scholar's Phrase Book' has been exhausted. Having had Jesus, St. John's, Trinity and the rest the only possibilities that spring to mind are God College and Virgin Mary College, both of which might be controversial for different reasons. None of today's political leaders really strike anyone as eponymous characters. If it was called Heath College it would get blown up, and if it was called Wilson College it would never get built. In fact any well known

character, religious, political or cultural would be deemed wildly unsuitable or Fascist by some part of the community. The Kennedy charisma has become a little tarnished by those whose job it is to tarnish charismas, and anyway, half the world is named after him already; Eliot was American, Cleeve rhymes with Caius, and Jagger College just doesn't sound right. I can't remember who discovered the double helix, which is good enough reason for excluding them anyway, and Einstein was German and possibly wrong into the bargain. So it seems that Sherrington is the man for the job, and I hope he does it well. It seems rather a pity that the foundations of the buildings will be too shallow, and that all the wiring will be wrong, and that the floors will warp and the paint will peel, and the walls will crack and that the rooms will be like goldfish bowls, open to everyone's gaze. It is more than likely that the drains will be entirely filled with concrete just so that people won't notice that some bright spark had connected them to the fresh water supply. The architect's coven will howl and wail with devilish delight as it holds its annual meeting at midnight under a full moon somewhere on the fens. The architects will dance demonically round the pyre of architectural textbooks. By 1997 all the books ever written about architectural technology will have been destroyed in this way, and all the little architects will be free to work their devilish, destructive wiles on us unhampered by science or morality. Never mind. According to Paul Erlich we'll be dead by 1999, so a few mad architects will seem relatively unimportant. Perhaps we'd be better off with a car park.

Any incorrect factual information in this article is purely a product of my overwrought imagination. I've just been struck on the head by a piece of crumbling Cripps masonry.

Douglas Adams

UNION DEBATES



A favourite pastime for Douglas was participating in the debates held at the Student Union building, which often attracted some illustrious guest speakers. The subjects proposed ranged from newsworthy topics such as hijacking, censorship, and whether Britain should be joining the European Union, to more frivolous notions like whether 'This house makes me laugh'. Douglas's archive suggests he spoke often, provoking new students with a deliberately patronizing welcome and self-deprecatingly questioning his own popularity.

He once impressed his audience and friends alike by casually arriving at the debate in a dressing gown and eating a bowl of cornflakes. In fact, his notes betray the reality that this charade was scripted in advance (below).

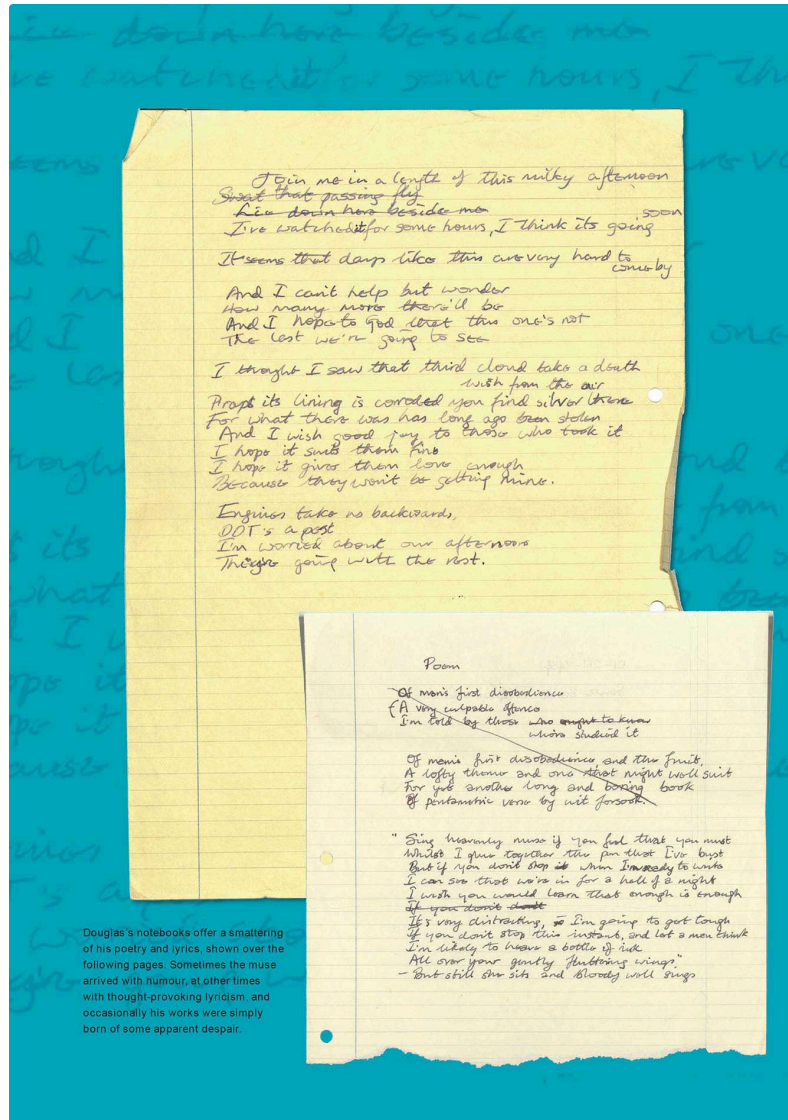
Walk in late with a bowl of cereal in my hand.

Well, where was I? Oh yes. Mr Acting president +....is wearing a very fetching creation, made lovingly from boiled eel skins by Mr David StQ Randall in his fashion suite...., I'm sorry, in his sweet fashionat his home in Jubilee Gardens. The eels were caught and prepared by Mr Randall, who stuffed them with chicken liver, threw bricks at them to tenderise their texture, and also stop them being so familiar, and eventually hammered them out with some of his oldest newspaper cuttings - he was still writing drivel back in the stone age - oh, now I remember those halcyon days on the Neanderthal Weekly - the scoop we had when some freak discovered the wheel and we were able to start a court and circular column. Yes after the Neanderthal weekly everything else is just life. That is, until this evening. I was passing the Union, and was just about to see my doctor about it when this vehicle suddenly screeches to halt beside me, and hand flies out to grab me, and before I knew we tearing down the street knocking down pederasts like penguins so many penguins, strange people one sees in Cambridge. Anyway there wasn't much room on this bicycle as I was quick to point out. Also, I was still eating my cereal, and a chap doesn't like being abducted on a bicycle in the middle of a late breakfast. Well not a Cambridge chappie at least. So I demanded to know ~~what it was~~ to what it was I owed this unaccustomed pleasure, and he said 'never did'. Well we cleared up that little bother and he said, are you the one who spoke in the Union last week. I had to admit it. I said yes, are you the one who laughed? He said we need you once again, the Union wants blood. I mentioned that I wasn't registered donor, and he just laughed - I remember he laughed last week. He then grabbed me by the neck, and dragged me here screaming and kicking. What he had to scream about I don't know. Wearily I went along, and at his bidding wandered into your midst, still clutching my cereal bowl, made a few disparaging remarks about Mr Kenyon's dinner suit, Mr Randal, and eels and started telling all these wierd people a pack of lies to pass the time. Which brings me to the present moment with rather an uncomfortable bump, proposing the motion, this house would speak in an emergency, and feeling rather the other way inclined. But what a prospect, what power. Here I am standing up in front of hundreds of people hanging from my every word - it's all right I'll cut you down later. What an opportunity, as Kenneth Tynan once said. *But whilst you're listening - no, don't stop, I like it*

I have something very important to say, which will be of deep concern to everyone of you. Recent, as yet unpublished research has revealed to us that the Union is in fact a deep sea squid. This is a serious state of affairs and it has been known to the standing committee now for a period of several weeks, but I must take them to task for having done nothing about it so far. It came as a severe shock to them I will admit, but this can no longer be accepted as a vindication of the present state of oblivious inaction.

How are we to face this situation? What we need, and what we must unflaggingly demand of the committee is a sufficient and continuous supply of molluscs crustacea and plankta. This is no peripheral issue., it is vital to the well being of the union if it is to survive as a major sub aquatic power, indeed if it is to continue to live, I have no more affection for giant cephalopods than the next man, but I feel that the importance of this matter cannot be overstressed, for a great multitude of hitherto undiscussed problems must be faced.

POETRY AND LYRICS



Douglas's notebooks offer a smattering of his poetry and lyrics, shown over the following pages. Sometimes the muse arrived with humour, at other times with thought-provoking lyricism, and occasionally his works were simply born of some apparent despair.

It may in fact have been last week
Yes, it ~~was~~ probably ^{was} last week.
Well,

Well I was ^{walking} down the street
When who on earth should I chance to meet
Who on earth ~~should~~ I meet I say that day
Actually it was quite possibly yesterday
Which was either yesterday or the day before yesterday
Well it wasn't very long ago.
And one doesn't need to know
Precisely when it all occurred
Though it might have been on February the third

On Feb the third I was on the street
Well not all of me but just my feet
I was walking along at any rate...
No I'm still not right about that date.

Yes now I remember the day I mean
It was yesterday at two fifteen
No, three fifteen two weeks ago
I really would quite like to know
So that next time I can get on
with the interesting bit.

Well it doesn't really matter when
I've said it once and P.H. says it again
No in fact I've said it twice
By the end of the book I'll have said it thrice

Day-Return to King's Cross.

The adverts change like city seasons,
Fresh as spring or dead as leaves;
They catch at fingers and fall again
And tempt and pull and try to please.
You leap and they are gone,
Snatch at a reflection of a figure
Who is not there, or even standing behind you.
Your dead weight bumps a bed,
And plate glass bumps your forehead.

Down in the underground: fresco ads.
In the dark recesses of hope grow secret pleasures.
Is it true? Your mind glances and peers around?
In this place where believings creep upon you,
Behind your eyes which look disinterestedly down the line.

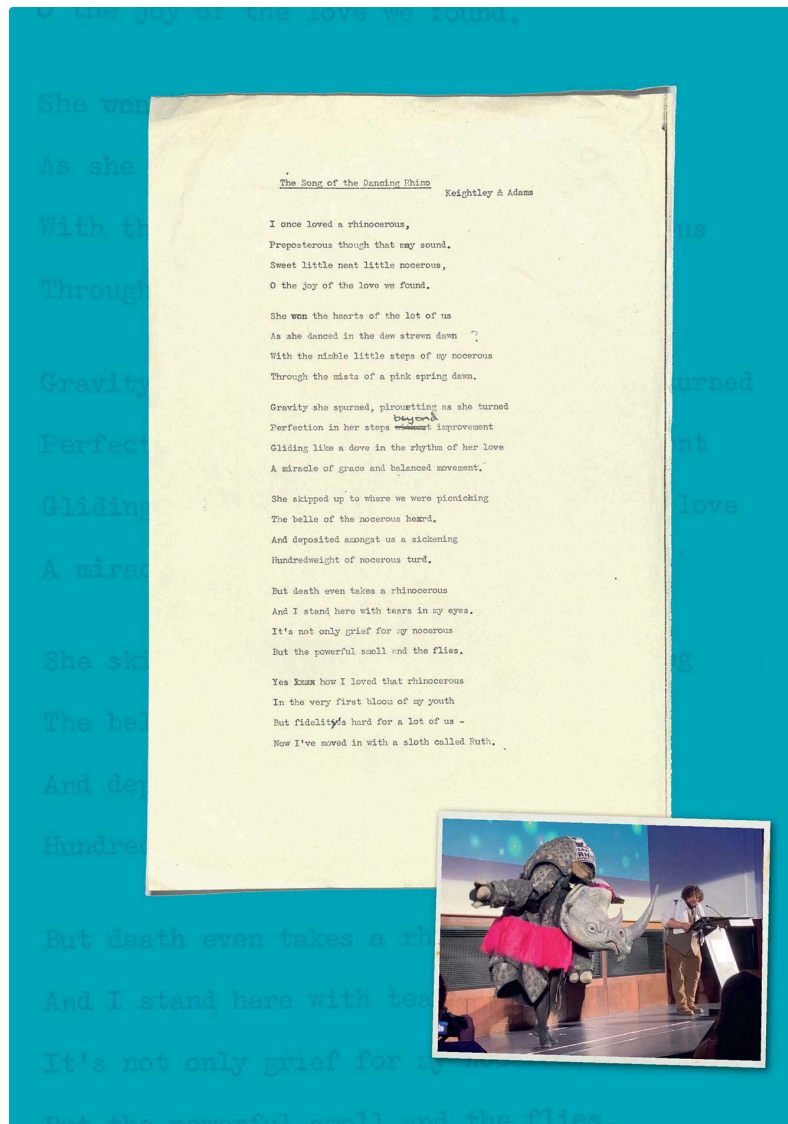
But furtive hopes, safe and dark and smoky
Congeal in the cold light of London.
And hope cannot be entertained
Like a friend one has for tea,
You must hang yourself upon him
Like offerings on a tree.

What tree is there in London?
Only some undergrowth ~~in~~ the Caledonian Road,
Some dull and brittle leaves ~~that~~
That cling to twigs kicked round and scraped upon the dust.

Return and live in Cambridge,
A very dull fool, trying to be wise.

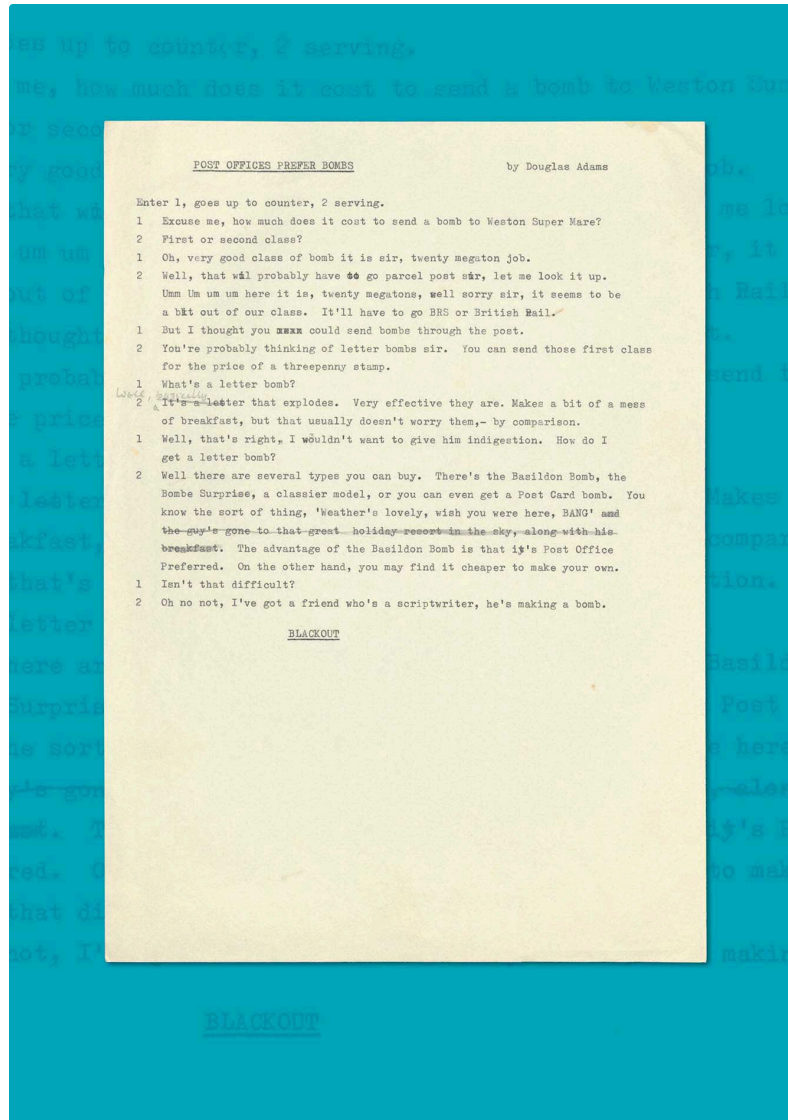
Douglas Adams

Douglas Adams



Douglas wrote *The Song of the Dancing Rhino* with his friend Chris Keightley and it was performed at Cambridge and in Edinburgh. The song was enacted most recently in 2022 by poet 'The Story Beast' at The Royal Geographical Society in London, as part of the Douglas Adams Memorial Lecture, a benefit event for the charity Save the Rhino International (right).

WRITER, PERFORMER AND DIRECTOR



This is Douglas's early draft of a sketch about parcel bombs at the Post Office, a reminder of the political landscape at the time. He performed it with his roommate Keith Jeffrey, in a smoker called *LSO in Flames* in November 1972. It was also part of the first real Adams-Smith-Adams show, *Several Poor Players Strutting and Fretting* (see [page 56](#)) the following summer.

<u>C H O X</u>		<u>Programme changes</u>
<u>TOP LAYER</u>		
1. CHOX (Benton, Hess)		All
2. COMIC CUTS (Benton, Joly)		Griff, Geoff, Clive, Jane
3. POINT TAKEN (Adams, Smith, Adams)		Jon, Martin
4. SELL YOUR SOUL (Benton, Hess)		Crispin, Jane, Sue
5. EAST TIMES (Adams, Smith, Adams)		Geoff
6. UGH! (Anderson)		Clive, Jon, Griff
7. BACKDATED (Adams, Smith, Adams)		Martin
8. DOUBLE CROSSED (Adams, Smith, Adams)		Jon, Sue, Jane, Martin
9. OOH OOH (Rhys Jones)		Griff, Geoff
10. EL HASNOTADOR (Lloyd)		Crispin, Jane, Sue, Martin
11. ROMANTIC TRADITION (Adams, Smith, Adams)		Jon, Geoff
12. SERVE YOU RIGHT (Anderson, Perkins)		Griff, Martin, Jane
13. CHICKEN PICKEN (Levene)		Jon, Griff
14. SHEER ROMANCE (Adams, Smith, Adams, Joly)		Geoff
15. BORING MORNING (Anderson)		Clive, Martin
16. 'AINT NO POINT IN CRYIN' (Benton, Hess)		Sue
17. NINE LOVES (Adams, Smith, Adams)		Crispin, Jane
18. EVERY SPOREBN (Anderson)		Clive
19. MR. CLEANUP (Canter)		Jon and his friends
<u>BOTTOM LAYER</u>		
1. LATE NIGHT FINAL (Canter, Ingram)		All
2. PARK INCIDENT (Canter)		Griff, Jon, Jane
3. GET ON UP (Canter, Hess, Joly)		Geoff
4. CASP (Adams, Smith, Adams)		Martin, Jon
5. COUNTRY PLANNING (Adams, Smith, Adams)		Crispin, Martin, Sue, Jane
6. SMALL WORD CLUB (Adams, Smith, Adams)		Jane
7. HOLD IN THE WALL CLUB (Adams, Smith, Adams)		Men
8. BURELES (Siegelman)		Sue
9. HANDELARNA (Hess, Joly)		The Band
10. FORKING (Rhys Jones, Joly)		Griff, Clive, Martin
11. THE OBITUARY (Canter)		Jon
12. SANDUST AND MAD CENTERS (Benton, Hess)		All

THE BAND	Nigel Hess (Musical Director, Keyboards) Alex Ingram (Keyboards) Philip Buscombe (Drums)	
DEPUTY STAGE MANAGER	Richard Thomas	
WARDROBE ASSISTANT	Sonja Dosanjh	
LIGHTING	Nigel Bragg	

Like his co-writer Will Adams, Douglas was very disappointed not to be cast in *CHOX* (1974), the final Footlights May Revue during their time at Cambridge. However, the programme booklet reveals that almost half the material in that show was credited to Adams-Smith-Adams, whose work was now well known among the students and vied for audiences with Footlights. Martin Smith made it though, joining Douglas's other friends Clive Anderson, Jon Canter, Geoff McGivern and Griff Rhys Jones. The show transferred to London's West End in July, during which time the powers at the BBC came to it and decided to make a programme from its highlights.

SCRIPTWRITING AS ADAMS-SMITH-ADAMS

D. I understand that the 8:35 to Basingstoke was late again Pitchard.

P. Was it sir? I don't rightly recall.

D. Yes it was. Very late. Very very late. Very very late very late. Three days late Pitchard.

P. Ah yes sir. We were having a tea break in the signal box sir and ~~we were~~ ~~also~~ ~~was~~ ~~not~~ ~~get~~ ~~a~~ ~~bit~~ ~~amused~~ ~~away~~ ~~sir~~, and that kettle does take an unconscionable long time to boil sir.

D. A what Pitchard? What did you say Pitchard

P. A long time to boil sir.

D. I want to know exactly what you said.

P. I said ^{it took an unconscionable long time.} ~~unconscionable~~ sir. ^{to boil sir}

D. What do you have to say about it?

P. I'm very long sir extremely long sir.

D. Firsts not good enough Pitchard.

P. Alright I'm bloody long sir.

D. That's better - and how long does the kettle take to boil. ^(what should you have said)

P. A bloody long time sir.

D. I see, that's better. The time to improve yourself Pitchard is when you are an assistant stationmaster, not an assistant signalman Pitchard.

~~well I must confess I wished~~

T. how you sir, and I wanted to talk to you about that sir. I wanted to put in for a vocabulary now.

D. A vocabulary now Pitchard.

Douglas wrote this noteworthy sketch, called *Point Taken* (AKA *Pritchard*), and first performed it with Martin Smith in May 1973, in a smoker concert called *A Burst of Apalsy*. The first page of the handwritten piece is above – the full transcript (accounting for the crossings out) is [below](#). The final sketch had some minor adjustments, but was mostly preserved as originally noted down by hand. ‘Pity about Arsenal’ was a line re-used in the very first episode of *The Hitchhiker’s Guide*.

D: I understand that the 8.35 to Basingstoke was late again Pritchard.

P: Woz it sir? I don't rightly recall.

D: Yes it was. Very late. Very very late. Very very very late. Three days late Pritchard.

P: Ah yes sir. We was having a tea break in the signal box sir and that kettle does take an unconscionable long time to boil sir.

D: What did you say Pritchard.

P: I said it took an unconscionable long time to boil sir.

D: And what should you have said

P: A bloody long time sir.

D: That's better Pritchard.

P: Extremely sorry sir.

D: Pritchard!

P: Er, bloody sorry sir.

D: The time to improve yourself Pritchard is when you are an assistant stationmaster, not an assistant signalman Pritchard.

P: Well yes sir, and I wanted to talk to you about that sir. I wanted to put in for a vocabulary rise.

D: A vocabulary rise Pritchard?

P: Yes sir. I wanted to be able to use words like existentialism.

D: Existentialism in a signal box?

P: Existentialism informs all areas of life sir.

D: But does it help explain why the 8.35 to Basingstoke was three days late? Why smartly turned out businessmen arrived in that beautiful city with three days growth upon their lilywhite cheeks, why [leafing through letters of complaint] Mrs Pinch-Buttocks pigeons arrived dead to a one, her Pekinese *[sic]* also curled up and died of sheer boredom. Mrs Crunchduck gave birth to triplets – we tried to get a midwife to her but she is still lost in some sidings at Clapham Junction. The vast majority of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra arrived at Winter Garden Basingstoke 60 hours after the local musical populous had been to a spirited performance of Beethoven's Fifth Piano Quintet [reading]: 'An economical performance' said the Basingstoke Advertiser, 'Unfortunately marred by long periods of total silence.' Ah yes,

and Col William Whittington Stokes was coming home to Basingstoke to die. He didn't make it, Pritchard.

P: Sorry sir.

D: It's not good enough Pritchard.

P: British Rail makes the going easy sir.

D: Which brings us on to the next point Pritchard. Passengers are requested not to use the toilet whilst the train is standing at a station. Three days is a long time Pritchard. What would you do about that Pritchard.

P: Can't we let it pass sir?

D: That is unfortunately what did happen in a large number of cases.

P: How very incommodious sir.

D: PRITCHARD – retract that five syllable word IMMEDIATELY!

P: Sorry sir. Very shitty I should say.

D: Perhaps you would care to explain.

P: It was existentialism what did it sir.

D: But you're not allowed to use words like that in the signal box. We're running a public service not a bloody University.

P: Well yes sir but it all happened because I wouldn't use the word. I was trying to tell my mate Bob about it, and had to make him guess by a sort of charade.

D: Charade Pritchard? What charade **P:** Well to give him the basic idea I left all the points in the railway region open.

D: You left ALL THE POINTS OPEN?

P: Well yes sir that's what existentialism is all about.

D: I know perfectly well what existentialism is. I was at Oxford too.

P: Sorry sir yes sir.

D: But why did this charade last three days?

P: Bob is a very stupid assistant signalman sir. He only got the hang of it after we'd derailed the Southampton Express. The whole thing came to him in a blinding flash.

D: A sort of revelation I suppose.

P: No sir the switching gear exploded. But I have reason to believe he died an enlightened man. He went up in flames sir.

D: Are you aware of the consequences of your actions Pritchard **P:** Well according to Sartre...

D: Do you realise that because of your playing philosophy with Western Region railways we have trains not simply derailed but leaping over each other like copulating caterpillars? The countryside is littered with great *[remainder crossed out – resumes, with a rewritten section]*

P: It's been done before sir

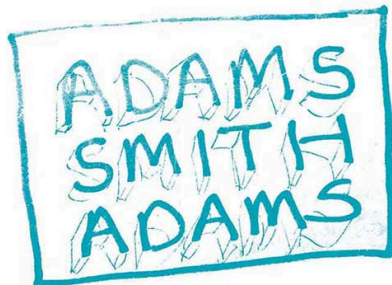
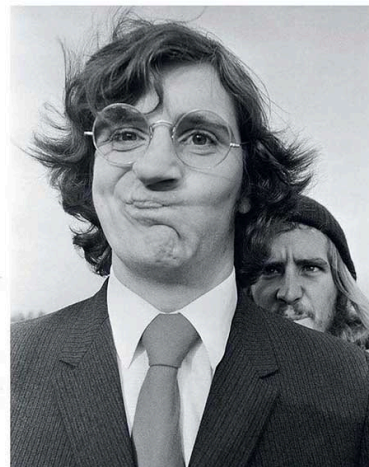
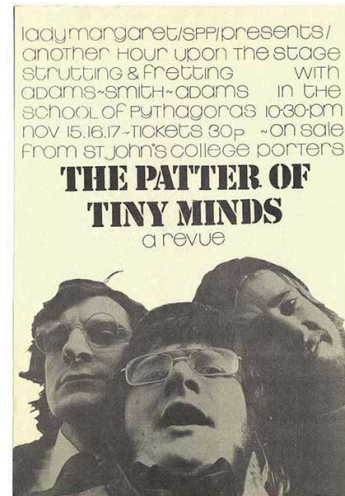
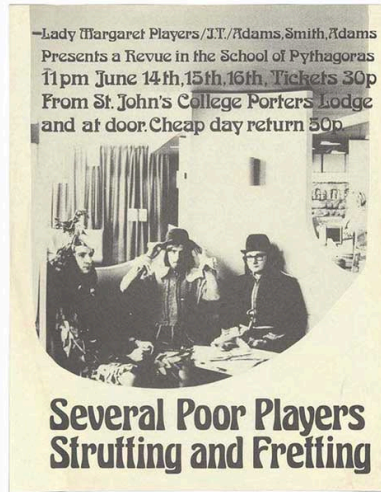
D: Yes Pritchard, and notably by you. You were transferred to us from the Southern Region because you completely paralysed the whole of Surrey, Sussex and Kent by issuing a structuralist timetable. But that is nothing in comparison with your latest philosophical faux pas. Do you realize that we have had hundreds of trains not only derailed but leaping over each other like copulating caterpillars. The countryside is littered with the smouldering heaps of expiring trains. The worst case is that of the Exeter St David Express which was involved in a multiple pile up Pritchard. 4000 people have been killed or injured, an estimated £50,000,000 pounds worth of damage has been done to rolling stock and railway lines. Didn't you see the Nine O'Clock News?

P: Yes sir.

D: Well?!?

P: Pity about Arsenal sir.



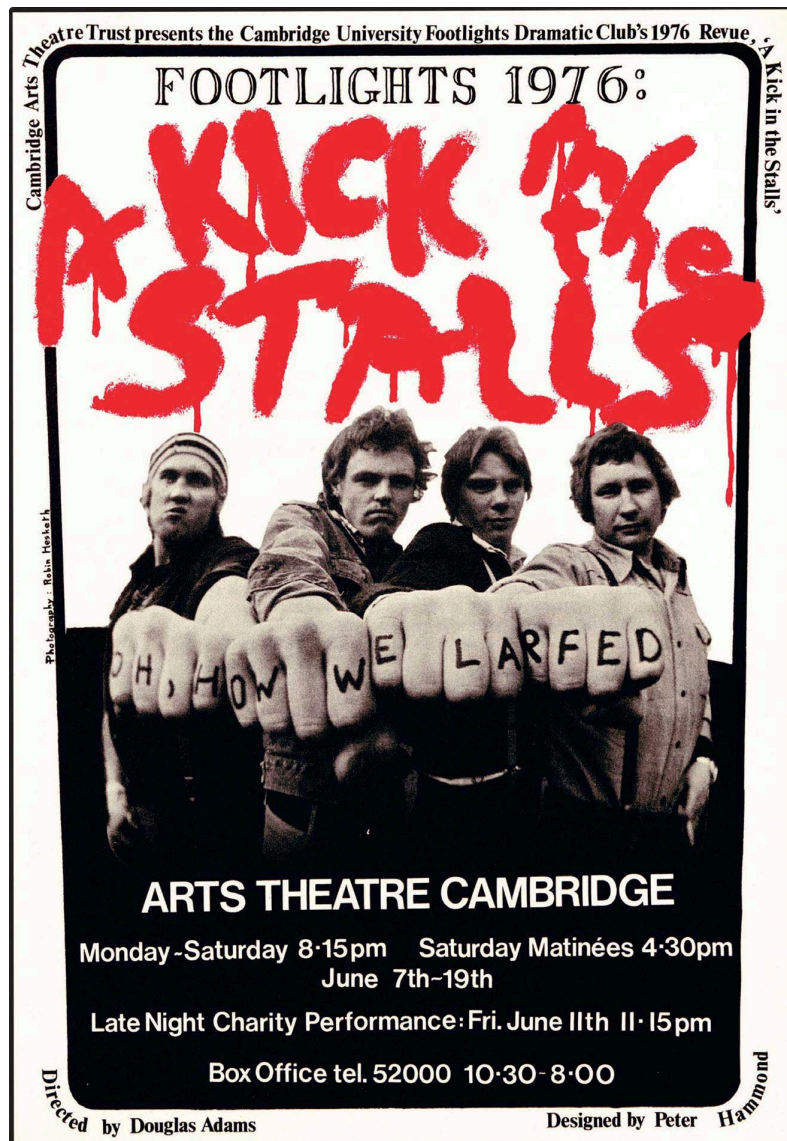


These images in some way sum up Douglas's time with Adams-Smith-Adams, shot on location in and around Cambridge, on 15 May 1973, by *Varsity* photographer Mike Penhaligon. In the photograph below, Douglas is right, Martin Smith is centre and Will Adams is left. Douglas himself applied the Letraset to many of the trio's posters.



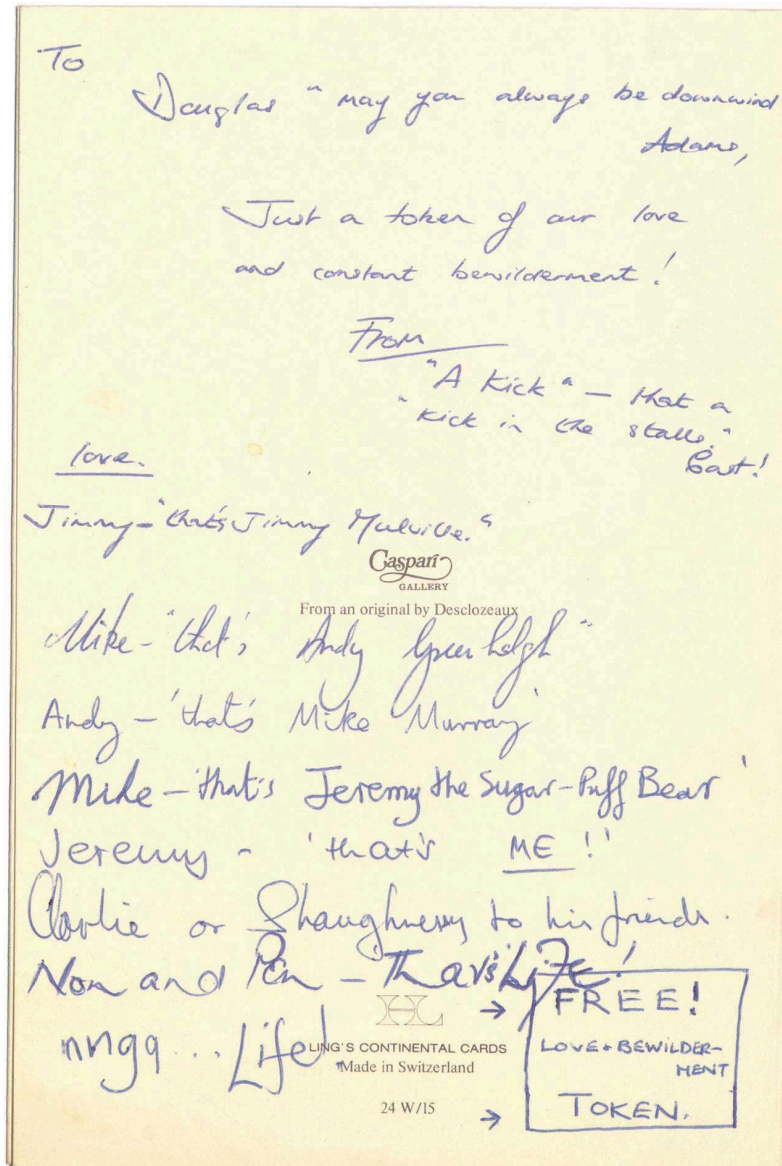
(In Tesser - Douglas Adams)



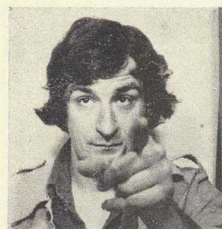


Once he left Cambridge, Douglas was once or twice invited back to work on a Footlights production, such as *A Kick in the Stalls*, which he directed in 1976, and included some Adams-Smith-Adams material. The memorabilia in this chapter demonstrates that the connections Douglas made during and soon after his university years proved influential to his whole career.

MORE ADAMS-SMITH-ADAMS



A Kick in the Stalls (see [below](#)) was staged two years after Douglas graduated from Cambridge and lists him as director, experience that perhaps helped to build him a CV that might seem impressive to others in the industry outside of Footlights. This card (above), signed by the show's cast, is addressed to Douglas 'may you always be downwind' Adams, and was given as a token of their 'love and constant bewilderment'.



DOUGLAS ADAMS (Director)

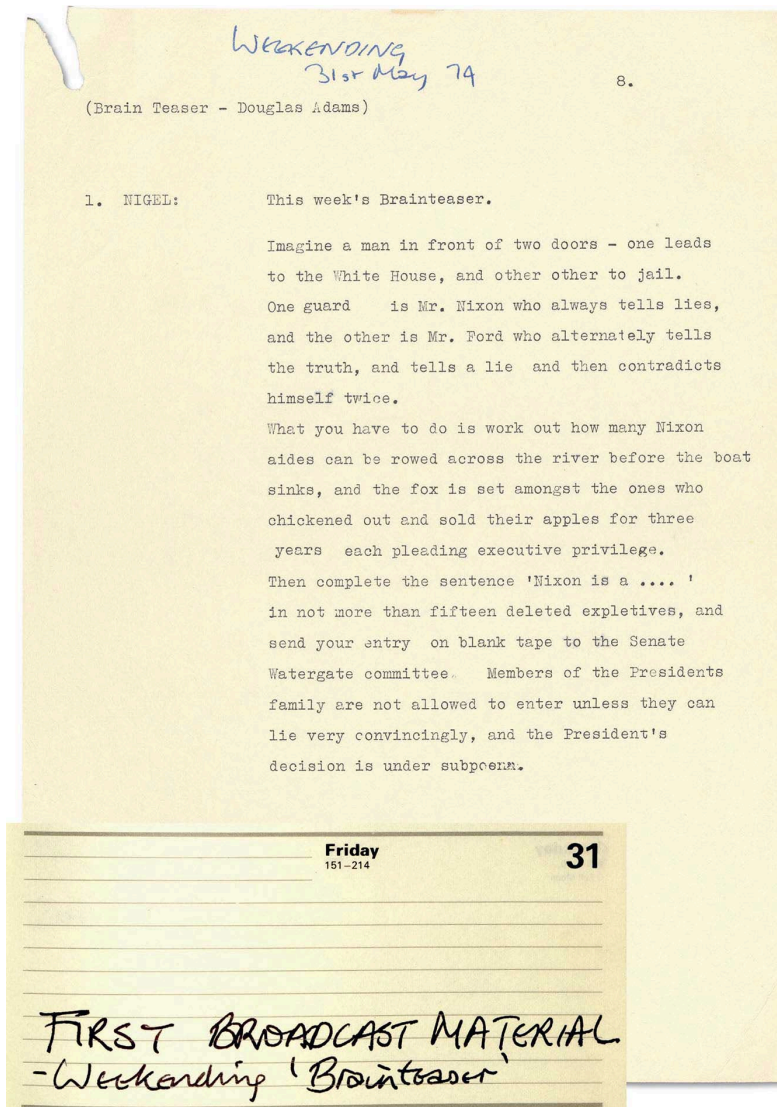
Douglas is larger than the average family and wears two pairs of trousers on each leg. This year's director, he was unable to do the show last year, because he became suddenly tall at the last minute and had to go into hospital to have his clothes burnt off. He is very sensitive about his enormous nose, which the cast refrain from mentioning, even when they are rehearsing it. He has an unending supply of witty stories, which keep everyone amused until long after they've fallen asleep. This doesn't matter however, as he comes round first thing in the morning to tell you what you missed. Recently he worked with members of the Monty Python team, but on the completion of the M62, he has returned to a less demanding job. Always a generous person, he rarely

carries money in case he gives it away.

Favourite sport: Flicking elephants onto their backs and watching them struggle.

Probable last words: Well basically I think that the basic basis of this is basically rubbish, actually.

Two years after Douglas graduated, in 1976 he took *The Unpleasantness at Brodie's Close* (an original Adams-Smith-Adams production) to the Edinburgh Fringe. The photograph at the top of this page shows (left to right) Douglas with John Lloyd, John Mason, Becky Fanner, Geoffrey Farrington and David Renwick. By this time, he and his collaborators were in direct competition with the Footlights show *A Kick in the Stalls*, which, having been directed by Douglas while it was in Cambridge (above, bottom) was by then under the direction of comedy writer and actor Griff Rhys Jones.



Friday 31 May 1974 was perhaps a landmark moment in Douglas's career with a capitalized diary note screaming 'FIRST BROADCAST MATERIAL' (above, inset). The typed page comes from the script of radio series 'Week Ending' ('Weekending' in Douglas's notes), a satirical current-affairs show, co-created and produced by Simon Brett, who would become very important to Douglas as the first producer of *The Hitchhiker's Guide*. The script demonstrates that Douglas could deliver a solid topical skit on the infamous Watergate scandal. The following week the show included more Adams-Smith-Adams material – this time a comment on the Communist Chinese government sending pairs of pandas overseas as diplomatic gifts (below).

WEEKENDING
FRIDAY 7th JUNE. 1974.

12.

(PANDAS - ADAMS SMITH ADAMS)

1. GRAMS: DISAPPEARING COUNTRYSIDE

2. COMMENTATOR: Our Changing Countryside. This week we examine
Nigel the Giant Flying Panda - one of the communist phenomenon of the animal kingdom, whose migratory habits seem to be determined by changes in the political climate. Whenever a thaw sets in, one of our tethered friends is sure to come winging over to these shores, though the natural habitat of these creatures seems to be behind the Iron Curtain, where diplomacy is traditionally carried out by this kind of brute force. The first pandas of spring have already been spotted, all over, and it seems that their instinct is to patch up East West relations, and to become the beast of both worlds. The question on everybody's lips is how their mating habits will compare with those of An-An and Mark-Mark. But what is more interesting is why this species of Chinese Propapanda should be choosing to nest in England's Heathland - a question which particularly worries the Moscow State Zoo - "The Cage-A-Bee" feels that a more suitable habitat would be the Marcia lands of Downing Street.

continues/ But it is hoped

1. COMMENTATOR: But it is hoped that the bad feeling will soon be
Nigel dispersed if the two Giant Pandas On-On and Tont-Tont, start breeding and produce lots of little ententes.
- Before I leave you - last week's Nature Quiz, and the answer to the question "What is Black and White and Red all over?" is of course a Chinese Panda. Goodnight.

2. GRAMS: UP & OUT



The Cambridge University 1974 Footlights Revue was the broadcast title of **CHOX** (see [page 67](#)), which was recorded on 3 August 1974 and shown on BBC2 on 26 August. It featured Adams-Smith-Adams' material, including a sketch variously known as 'The Hole in the Wall Gang' or 'The Paranoid Society', the first pages of which are reproduced here and opposite.

PAUSE. THEY LISTEN.

CAMS

ACTION

SOUND

CRISPIN
Ssshh!

PAUSE. THEY LISTEN.

My mistake. Mr. Shoulder,
perhaps you'd calm us all
down by telling us one of
your jokes.

JON
Oh! Right, well there's
this bloke, see, and he says
to this other bloke 'Who was that
Lady I saw you with last night?'
And the other bloke says
'YOU'VE BEEN FOLLOWING ME AGAIN!'

PAUSE.

CRISPIN
That was in rather bad
taste!

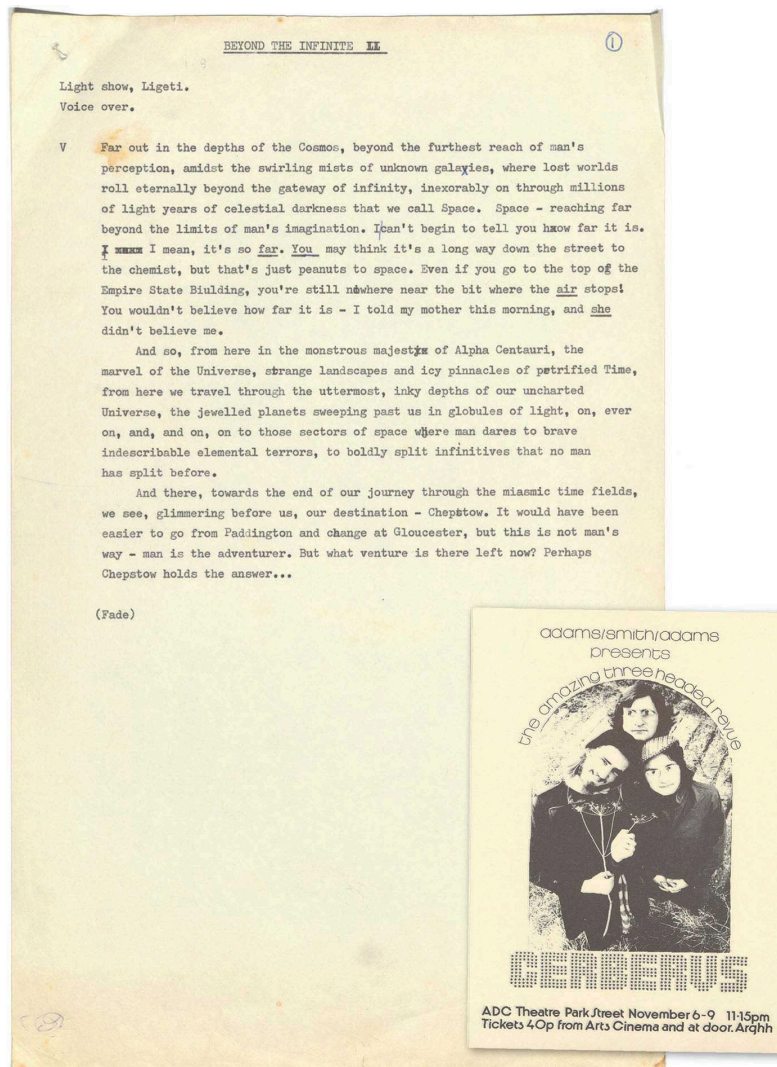
JON:
Sorry, I got carried away.
Someone was staring at me
maliciously.
THEY ALL DO A DOUBLE TAKE ON CLIVE

- 63 -

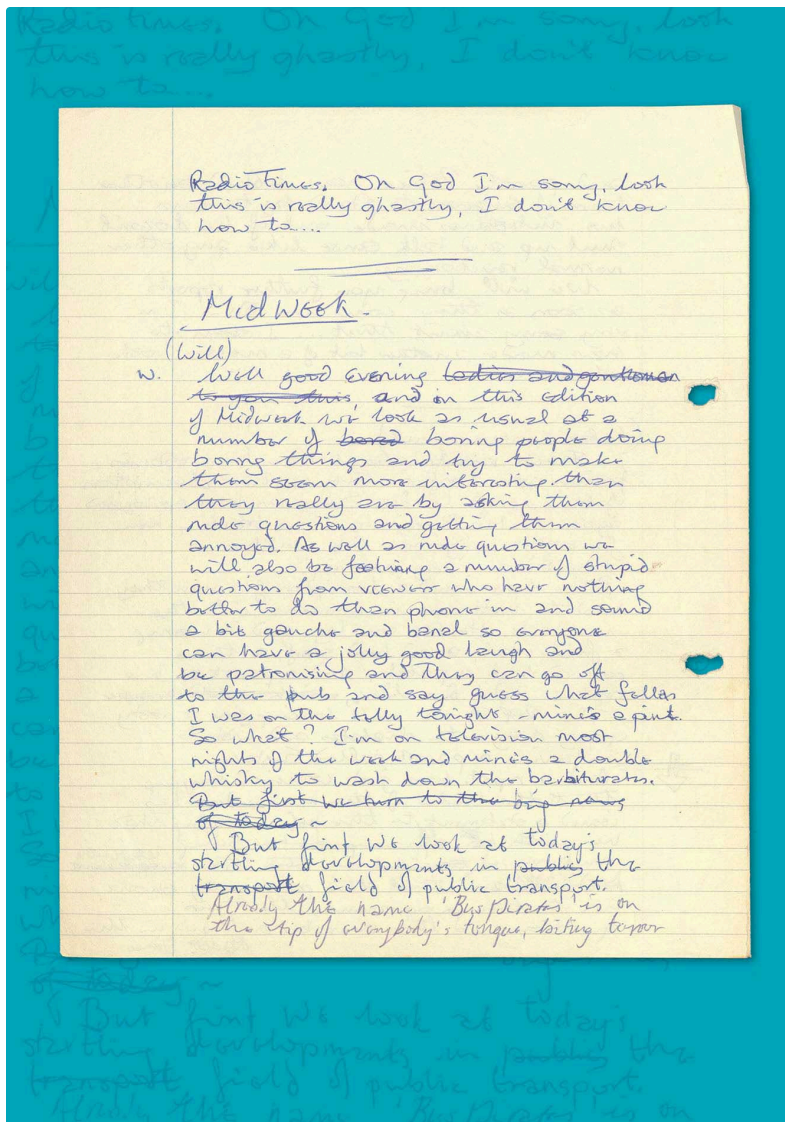
Sorry, I got carried away.
Someone was staring at me

Far out in the depths of the cosmos, beyond the furthest reach of man's perception, amidst the swirling mists of unknown galaxies, where hot worlds roll eternally beyond the gateway of infinity, inexorably on through millions of light years of celestial darkness that we call space. Space - reaching far beyond the limits of man's imagination - I can't begin to tell you how far it is - I mean it's so far. You may think it's a long way down the street to the ~~tobacconist~~ chemist's, but that's just peanuts to space. Even if you go to the top of the Empire State Building you're still nowhere near the bit where the air stops. You just wouldn't believe how far it is - I told ~~that~~ my mother this morning, and even she didn't believe me.

Far out in the depths of the cosmos, beyond the furthest reach of man's perception, amidst the swirling mists of unknown galaxies, where hot worlds roll eternally ~~to~~ beyond the gateway of infinity, inexorably ^{on} through millions of light-years of celestial darkness that we call space. Space - reaching far beyond the limits of man's imagination. I can't begin to tell you how far it is - I mean, it's so far. You may think it's a long way down the street to the chemist's, but that's just peanuts to space. I mean, you take the elevator to the top of the Empire State Building and you're still nowhere near the bit where the air stops. You just wouldn't believe how far it is - I told my mother this morning, and ^{even} ~~she~~ didn't believe it.



Cerberus was the name given to the Adams-Smith-Adams revue at the ADC Theatre, Cambridge, in November 1974. It wasn't the critical success the trio had hoped for, but the audiences seemed to enjoy it. The opening monologue of *Cerberus* was called 'Beyond the Infinite' and has elements that would later be familiar to *Hitchhiker's Guide* fans. It appears among Douglas's papers in both his own handwriting (above, top) and handwritten by Will Adams (opposite, bottom). The final typed piece is reproduced above, and the poster for the show, featuring Douglas (centre) with Will Adams (left) and Martin Smith (right), is inset.



The pages relating to the pirate (played by Douglas, annotated as D in the script; W is, of course, Will Adams) are transcribed on [pages 86-7](#), ending as the dialogue shifts to a phone-in where a detective superintendent tries to arrest Y-Fronts Silver over the phone. This arrest-by-phone was a concept alluded to years later by Zaphod in *The Hitchhiker's Guide*.

Wm. Adams

into their hearts. We have in the studio tonight
the self-styled leader of the ~~mainstream~~ ^{ERS} ~~mainstream~~,
4-Fronts Silver. ~~But first we talk to~~

Mr Silver, you've come up against a fair amount of adverse criticism in your work.

Due inevitably comes into conflict situations with any art-form. What one is trying to do collectively, as a group - we are very much aware of the need for a group concept - in how shall I put it, care the shit out of my average urban man, and woman, in the street, who is, after all, very much a product, and is a large extent unaware of, this fact, and in doing so we are in a very real sense on the programme format.

- we are very much aware of

~~- we are very much aware of the need for a group concept~~

W. ~~that~~, why piracy?

D. W-2, I think we see piracy as an alternative
 means of self-expression. ~~It is~~ ^{the} ~~injection~~ ^{injection} of traditional
~~elements into contemporary~~ ^{elements into contemporary} ~~re-injection~~ ^{re-injection}
 of sub-cultural ~~styles~~ ^{styles} ~~into~~ ^{into} the modern urban environment.

W. A lot of people are somewhat disturbed by the role of the bus in all this.

D I think this is the wrong way to look at it, I don't think the bus poses such a complex problem as many commentators would suggest. ~~the fact is education is a high degree of rote ballistics~~ It is ^{you know the sort of thing I mean} rather all very much a normal 26 up 32 down for something in the lower compartment; and you know we'd like to keep to that because it's very much the sort of thing we're doing.

W. But why a bus?

Well, it's a means of bringing art to the people.

W, is ~~was was was~~ of. But surely probes usually confine their activities to the sea. Aren't you being a little avant garde.

well before we go on to
the phone-in spot

D. Don't think we're not aware of this, but we do find that the kind of people we're aiming at ~~are~~ tend to be found in the High St. rather than wading about on the high seas. After all, if Kydd had had access to buses, I think he might well have used them. Mm PAUSE Night well ~~and~~ done...

W. At this point I'd like to introduce our other guest in the studio - one of today's leading sociologists from Sussex University, Dr. Hugh Wallace ~~Dr. Hugh~~ Swedley. Good evening.

M. BOOS

W. Now, doctor, for many years you've been ~~studying~~ ^{and sound analyses} a student of the motives ~~and attitudes~~ of the phenomenon or urban ^{gracy}. What have you to say in response to ~~the~~ ^{Prof} Silber's claim that he is performing a public service vehicle.

M. THINKS Well, Jim lad. Yo ho ho and a bottle of rum pieces of eight pieces of eight, pretty pretty fifteen men on a dead man's chest Jim lad. AD 413

W. Well Capt. Silber, a few interesting points here, ... and much of it is ~~in~~ ^{at} ~~substantially true~~ ^{substantially true}

D. Yes, that's awfully true and I feel Dr Swedley has there a very ^{to} very good voice

W. Dr Swedley - what do you think is the reason behind the current wave of piracy?

M. Ah, well it's having one leg, y'see. It's what comes natural when I mean, ~~pick~~ ^{pick} ~~bicycles~~ ^{bicycles} out for the average monopod

DASHES OFFSTAGE, SOUNDS (OFF) OF HIM WALKING THE PLANK.

W. And I think we have our first caller on the line now - from London, it's Det. Supt. MacThreeket of Scotland Yard who warns you that anything you say may be taken down and used in evidence against you.

MacT. Hello hello hello

W. Ah, helio helio helio, supt. What's your question, please?

MacT. I would like to ask Mr. Silver if he would like to accompany ~~to~~ me down to the station.

D. Well, many people have come up to me and asked me this, but regrettably, and I mean that, I must decline the offer.

W. Well, supt. Do you want to come back on that?

MacT. ~~Kind of~~ Y-es. I'd like to place Mr. Silver under close arrest.

D. Oh really? That's very interesting and indeed disturbing. But I'm afraid there'll be little opportunity for this to occur, and don't think I'm not flattered, because I am. But at this present moment in time, the studio is surrounded by a ~~flatt~~ flotilla of double-deckers, a sort of omni-armada....

BELL RINGS. CANNON FIRE. CANNON-BALL COMES ON, CAUGHT BY W.

D. Ah, that's my 'bus.... EXIT
MUGG CANNONADE, NOISE CHAOS.

... and parrot. Police have asked another team of surgeons to stand by to turn his intestines inside out if he doesn't shut up and talk sense like any other normal reactionary.

We will bring you further reports as soon as they come in. Oh – I'm very sorry about that ... I seem to have made another bit of a mess – look let me...

(Later Announcement)

Fresh reports about the bus robberies. Police now confirm the earlier description of the gang's leader. Surgeons have apologised again to Mr Blemish and are treating him for some indigestion. His condition is described as 'very amusing'.

Police have issued a description of a man they wish to interview in connection with the incidents. He has one leg, and is wearing a frock coat, a red headscarf, a three-cornered hat, a patch, and a parrot on his right shoulder. The RSPCA are still looking for a

nasty yappy dog with diabetes and wish to interview a parrot called Eustace.

And a report has just come in saying that the leader of the marauders has issued a statement to the police saying that he is being interviewed on BBC television tonight and that the police may phone in to the programme with their questions to the number published in the Radio Times. Oh God, I'm sorry, look this is really ghastly, I don't know how to...

Midweek

(Will)

W: Well, good evening, and in this edition of 'Midweek' we look as usual at a number of boring people doing boring things and try to make them seem more interesting than they really are by asking them rude questions and getting them annoyed. As well as rude questions we will also be featuring a number of stupid questions from viewers who have nothing better to do than phone in and sound a bit gauche and banal so everyone can have a jolly good laugh and be patronising and they can go off to the pub and say 'guess what fellas, I was on the telly tonight – mine's a pint'. So what? I'm on television most nights of the week and mine's a double whiskey to wash down the barbiturates. But first we look at today's startling developments in the field of public transport. Already the name 'Bus Pirates' is on the tip of everybody's tongues, biting terror into their hearts. We have here in the studio tonight the self-styled leader of the marauders, Y-Fronts Silver. Mr. Silver, you've come up against a fair amount of criticism in your work.

[crossed out section]

W: Why piracy?

D: Well, I think we see piracy as an alternative means of self-expression – the communal consciousness of tradition, the re-injection of sub-cultural myths into the modern urban environment.

W: A lot of people are somewhat disturbed by the role of the bus in all this.

D: I think this is the wrong way to look at it. I don't think the bus poses such a complex problem as many commentators would suggest. It is after all very much a normal 26 up, 32 down, you know the sort of thing, I mean, no smoking in the lower compartment; and you know, we'd like to keep to that because it's very much the sort of thing we're doing.

W: But why a bus?

D: Well, it's a means of bringing art to the people.

W: But surely pirates usually confine their activities to the sea. Aren't you being a little avant garde?

D: Don't think we're not aware of this, but we do find that the kind of people we're aiming at tend to be found in the High Street, rather than wading about in the high seas. After all, if Kydd had had access to bikes, I think he might well have used them. Mmmm PAUSE might well have done.

W: At this point I'd like to introduce our other guest in the studio – one of today's leading sociologists, from Sussex University, Dr. Wallace Smedley. Good evening.

M: Nods

W: Now, doctor, for many years you've been a student of the motives and social derivatives of the phenomenon of urban piracy. What have you to say in response to Capt Silver's claim that he is performing a public service vehicle.

M: THINKS Well, Jim lad. Yo ho ho and a bottle of rum pieces of eight pieces of eight, pretty polly, fifteen men on a dead man's chest Jim lad [AD LIB]

DASHES OFFSTAGE, SOUNDS (OFF) OF HIM WALKING THE PLANK.

W: And I think we have our first caller on the line now – from London, it's Det. Supt. MacThreefeet of Scotland Yard who warns you that anything you say may be taken down and used in evidence against you.

MacT: Hello hello hello

W: Ah, hello hello hello, Supt. What is your question please?

MacT: I would like to ask Mr Silver if he would like to accompany me down to the station.

D: Well, many people have come up to me and asked me this, but regrettably, and I mean that, I must decline the offer.

W: Well, Supt. Do you want to come back on that?

MacT: Yes. I'd like to place Mr. Silver under close arrest.

D: Oh really? That's very interesting and indeed disturbing. But I'm afraid there'll be little opportunity for this to occur, and don't think I'm not flattered, because I am. But at this present moment in time, the studio is surrounded by a flotilla of double-deckers, a sort of omni-armada...

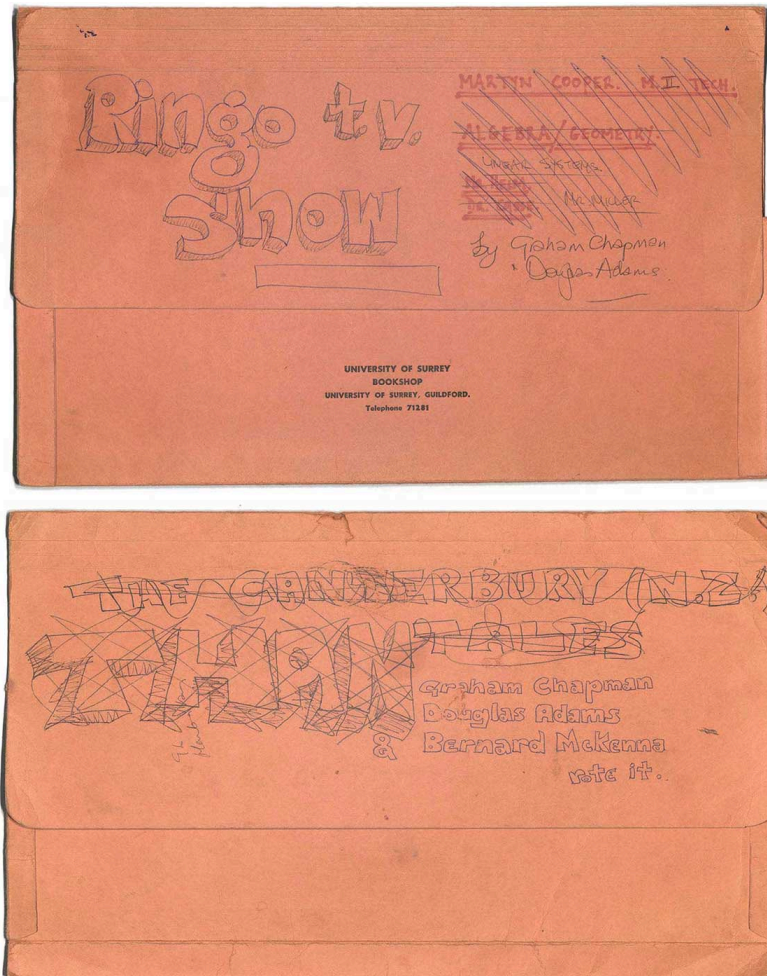
BELL RINGS. CANNON FIRE. CANNON-BALL COMES ON, CAUGHT BY W.

D: Ah, that's my 'bus... EXIT

HUGE CANNONADE, NOISE CHAOS.



GRAHAM CHAPMAN AND RINGO STARR



Douglas met *Monty Python's* Graham Chapman in July 1974 and the two formed a friendship. Writing with Chapman led to all sorts of opportunities, including co-writing a script for a US TV special to tie in with the release of Ringo Starr's latest album, *Goodnight Vienna*. Douglas's diary reveals that he met with Starr first on Friday 10 January 1975, and then again in February, March and September. The script was never made into the TV show, but Chapman's estate published it in a collection of his works in 1999, and a full, original copy, tucked inside this folder (above, top), survives in Douglas's archives, too.

2002 *Room*

REHEARSAL SCRIPT Proj. No. 1155/2341

~~THE END OF THE ROAD SHOW~~
 CHAPMAN REVUE *OUT OF THE TREES.*
 (Working Title)

Producer Bernard Thompson
 P.A. Don Clive
 A.F.M. Philip Hill
 Producer's Assistant.. Freda Barratt

Designer IAN RAMSLEY EXT. 4838

Costume SUSAN WHEEL EXT. 2713
 Make-up CECILE HAY-ARTHUR 4177

T.M.1 PETER BOOTH
 T.M.2 CLIVE GULLIVER
 SOUND LEN SHOREY

REHEARSAL ROOM
 Latimer Mission,
 Bramley Road,
 London, W.10 Tel. 969.8826

14th October - 18th October 1975 inclusive

Underground stations Ladbroke Grove (Metropolitan)
 Latimer Road "

Bus No.7 (Monday to Sat.)
 15 (every day)
 (see map page 1)

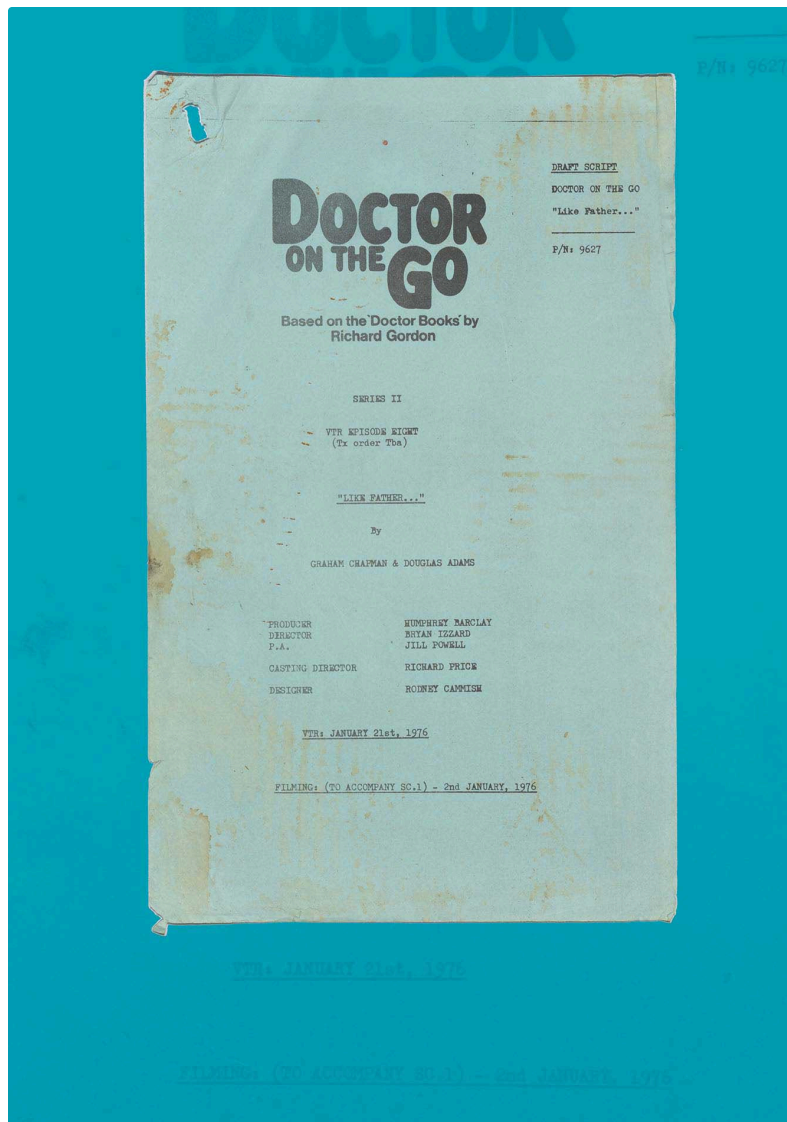
STUDIO 8 19th OCTOBER 1975

FILMING
 6th - 10th October inclusive on location

Film Cameraman.....STAN SPEEL
 Film Editor GROUP ONE 992.5807

Production Office Room 3025 EXT.2808/9

Than (above, bottom) seems an unusual word with which to top and tail a comedy series. Commissioned by the BBC as simply *Chapman Revue*, it was clearly meant as a follow-up to *Python*. Co-written in the first half of 1975 by Chapman with Douglas and Scottish writer and producer Bernard McKenna, it went through a period of being called *The End of the Road Show*, but made it to air as a one-off sketch show called *Out of the Trees*. The cast included Chapman himself, plus two eventual *Hitchhiker* leads, Simon Jones and Mark Wing-Davey. The title page of the script is reproduced above.



Graham Chapman had originally studied medicine at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, before falling into Footlights, meeting John Cleese and eventually becoming a Python. His medical knowledge, though, was put to good use when he wrote the scripts for the TV adaptations of Richard Gordon's *Doctor* books. The 1977 second series was called *Doctor on the Go*, and one episode, with the working title 'Like Father', was a collaboration with Douglas. You can find the episode itself online – it reached our screens as 'For Your Own Good'.

A LIARS Autobiography

by Graham Chapman
and Douglas Adams.
(Whose autobiography it isn't)

I was born in Leamington (~~Leamington~~)
now officially known as Royal Leamington Spa,
moderately famous for the manufacture of gas cookers
(see Chapter 14) about which more anon.^{*} The
year was ninety forty two, and ~~the~~ the period of
gestation ended on the 7th February during
a rather botched up air-raid ~~which the~~
in which the Germans thought they were
hitting Coventry - but more of that anon.^{*1}
Which is a word I'm very fond of. My parents,
Tim + Beryl², sorry, Tim + Betty², were outraged
~~at~~ when I arrived because they'd been expecting
a heterosexual Black Jew with several ~~in~~ rather
amusing birth deformities, because they needed
the problems. They lived in an enormous Gothic
castle in the ~~on~~ South of France called
Dundrinkinginand~~him~~kinstonicwithicebutndemonin,
which was originally built for Marco Polo for himself
and a few friends which he wanted to invite round
after the pub closed - an awe inspiring construction
of granite and bits of wood with sweeping lawns
recently modified to include an ornamental marble
swamp filled with pink fizzy water.³ He felt a sharp
stab of steel in his groin, and the sickening sensation
of the warm ooze of blood welling up inside his nether.

* Very stupid word which won't be used again in this
book.

- 1 None of this is true. I was in fact born in Stalbridge, in Dorset
(but if you want to send any letters to Stalbridge, congratulations
it on being my birthplace, please take not that the correct
postal address is Stalbridge STURMISTER NEWTON, Dorset).
The correct date of birth was Jan 6th 1940. See page 14)
2 ~~Actually Tim + Betty~~ Actually Walter + Edith + Mark

This page from Douglas's archive comes from the project through which Douglas's writing partnership – and friendship – with Graham Chapman floundered, very nearly (almost, but not quite) irrevocably. The title and writing credits on Douglas's handwritten notes reproduced above perhaps rather speak for themselves. The page is transcribed overleaf.

A LIARS AUTOBIOGRAPHY

By Graham Chapman and Douglas Adams (whose autobiography it isn't) was born in Leamington, now officially known as Royal Leamington Spa, moderately famous for

the manufacture of gas works (see Chapter 14) about which more anon.* The year was nineteen forty two, and the period of gestation ended on the 7th February during a rather botched up air-raid in which the Germans thought they were hitting Coventry – but more of that anon,^{*1} which is a word I'm very fond of. My parents, Tim & Beryl, sorry Tim & Betty,² were outraged when I arrived because they'd been expecting a heterosexual black Jew with several rather amusing birth deformities, because they needed the problems. They lived in an enormous Gothic castle in the South of France called 'Dundrinkinginandslimlinetonicwithicebutnolemon' which was originally built for Marco Polo for himself and a few friends which he wanted to invite round after the pub closed – an awe-inspiring construction of granite and bits of wood with sweeping lawns recently modified to include an ornamental malaria swamp filled with pink fizzy water.³

He felt a sharp stab of steel in his groin, and the sickening sensation of the warm ooze of blood welling up inside his nightie.

A mortifying hail of bullets passed through his left ear as he mused 'Hey that was my ear.' Thinking this over he went for a hamburger with French fries and side salad with Thousand Island dressing.⁴

Sorry.

At the age of two years + nine months⁶ I was in Ibiza which at that time was a very fashionable centre for young trendies – smoking pot, LSD, cocaine, being thrown into prison by a man called F. Rzanko and being treated appallingly by nuns who liked to think of themselves as nurses. I was driven directly from the airport to a bar/restaurant called the Green Dolphin in Ibiza town, where, having qualified as a medical practitioner at an early age, I was to be faced with my first patient. I went in, sat down, met Marty Feldman, Tim Brooke Taylor, ordered a cheap meal, because at the age of two years, nine months, one day, I was not particularly rich – we bragged a bit about that and this and how many women we hadn't had when I decided to go to the toilet. (It was the drinks on the plane coming over.) I went into the toilet, peed, and washed my hands and was extremely surprised by the soap which protruded in a very phallic fashion from a chrome iron prong mounted on the wall. I went and told Tim, who was in mid gaspachio [*sic*], that there was something he ought to see in the lavatory/toilet/men's room/little boy's room/bathroom/wet room/comfort station. He went in to wash his hands/pee/crap and came back ashen faced saying he didn't think it

was much of a joke. I thought he was being typically prudish, but then he pointed out that there were a couple of legs sticking out from under the door of the cubicle. Being a newly qualified doctor, I leapt in, opened the door and found a man who had apparently fallen off his seat in a coma, presumably from morphine, but I never was a very good doctor. I found the manageress a very capable – and all of them are German – lady, and we carried him out on to the pavement, not calling the vicious police. He eventually recovered enough to be carried home, and we discovered that the reason he had been drinking and drugging was that he had killed a young boy with his wang that morning.⁷ Several years later I was also in Ibiza and did not hear about or observe an incident in which a rather silly person who happened to be on LSD fell through the cover of a near dry well outside someone's villa. On arriving at the bottom he broke one leg.⁸ He remained there till about noon the next day, when his cries attracted the attention of a passerby who decided to help out. He passed him down a rope for him to climb up. He tied the rope as best he could round his waist and was hauled up, using his own foot and arms to assist his progress. Near the top of the well the noose of the rope slipped up over one arm round his neck and he was in danger of being strangled, so he was forced to take out his sheath knife and cut the rope so that he then fell back down the well, breaking his other leg, and an arm. A friend of the friend that had been helping now arrived, who, using the rest of the rope decided to climb down and help the poor victim. He was a little overoptimistic in the strength of his arms, and plummeted *[sic]* full thirty feet on to the other victim and broke his jaw, the other arm, his own ribs and one leg. They were both eventually rescued some twelve hours later by ladder, and the victim was taken off to a Spanish hospital and treated as a victim. He eventually managed to escape to an English hospital – he felt it necessary since the screws they put in his jaw had become rusty and fallen out – and he can now almost say ‘mmnmmf’¹⁴ and nearly feed himself.

A friend of the friend that had been helping now arrived, who using the rest of the rope decided to

climb down and help the poor victim.

The preceding passage is quite evidently irrelevant and out of sequence, so my co-author has suggested that we ought to clarify a few points.

DATE OF BIRTH 8th JANUARY 1941

SEX MALE

CHRISTENED GRAHAM CHAPMAN

PLACE OF BIRTH LEICESTER

STAR SIGN – CAPRICORN (CHINESE YEAR OF THE DRAGON)

FAVOURITE FOOD CURRY

LEAST FAVOURITE FOOD POISON

FAVOURITE POISON GALLAMINE TRIETHIODIDE

FAVOURITE ANTIDOTE NEOSTIGMINE

EDUCATED AT SOUTH WIXTON JUNIOR BOYS

RAVENHURST RD MIXED INFANTS + JUNIOR SCHOOL

KIBWORTH GRAMMAR SCHOOL

MELTON MOWBRAY GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Footnotes:

- [1](#) None of this is true. I was in fact born in Stalbridge, in Dorset. (But if you want to send any letters to Stalbridge, congratulating it on being my birthplace, please take note that the correct postal address is Stalbridge, STURMINSTER NEWTON, Dorset.) The correct date of birth was Jan 6th 1940. (See [page 14](#).)
- [2](#) Actually Walter & Edith & Mark
- [3](#) This particular footnote is completely untrue.
- [4](#) This passage is from a rather unsuccessful and as yet unpublished novel written by my co-author which I had to include because he was such a magnetic presence and also is rather bigger than I am – but it won't happen again because I'll get my friend Denis^{[5](#)} to duff him over. In fact I'm rather surprised that he included this bit. I didn't – you must have done because I didn't, oh perhaps I did. Sorry.
- [5](#) Denis Joseph O'Driscoll
- [6](#) This is a complete lie; I was twelve.^{[9](#)}
- [7](#) This incident is denied by everyone, but the Gaspachio was nice – so is Maggie Henderson's chow. Sorry, Bernard's wife's.

[8](#) This bit is so like a lift from Gerard Hoffnung it must be true, especially as he stole it from a Canadian humourist whose name eludes me at this moment, check later. [13](#)

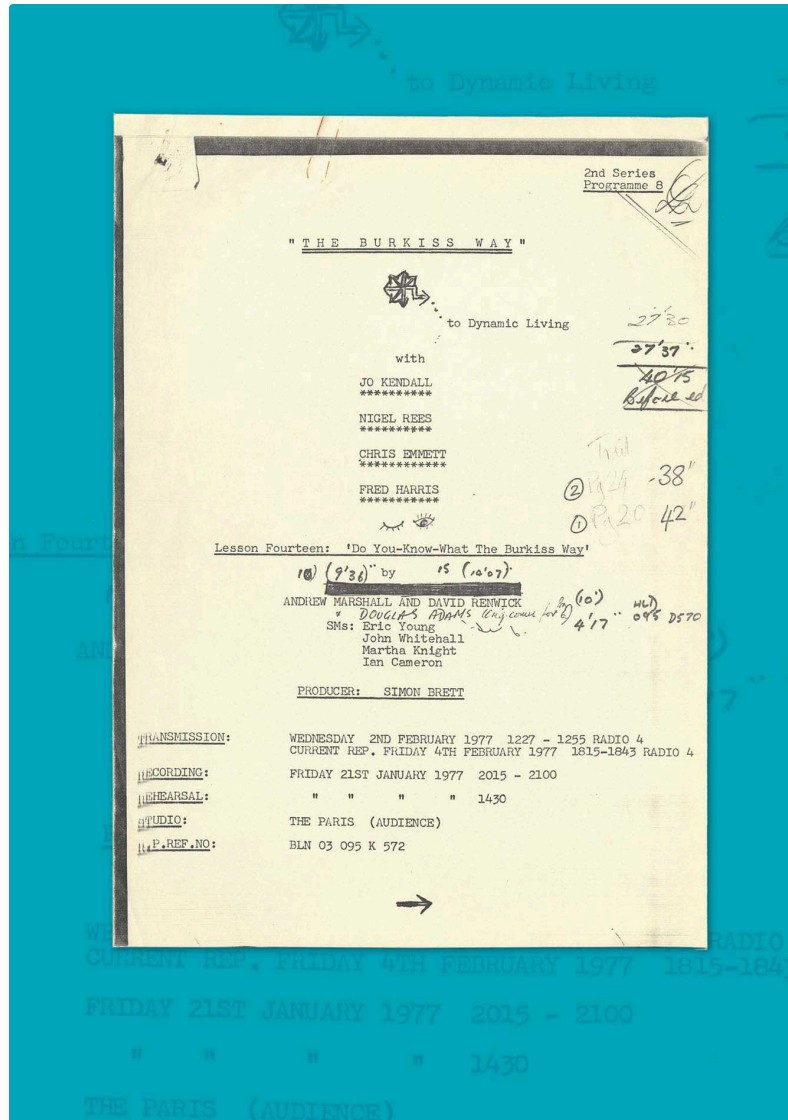
[9](#) Actually 25.

[13](#) Oh why bother.

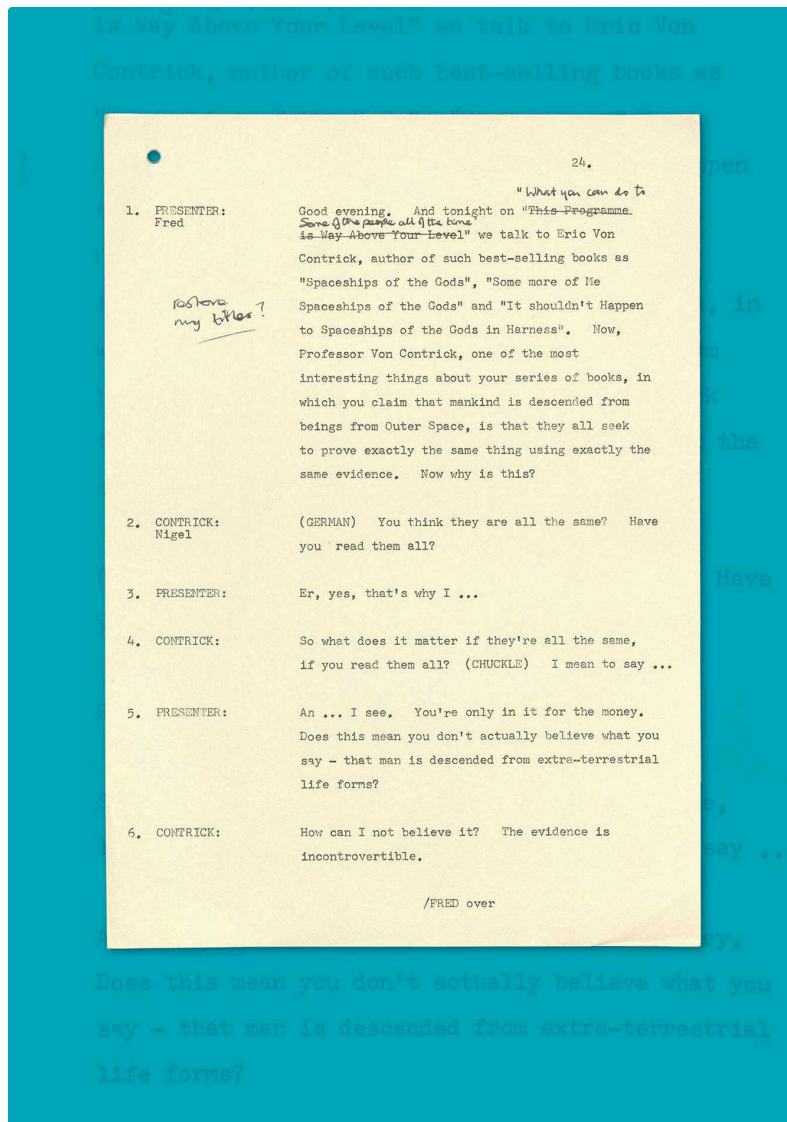
[14](#) Pronounced 'mmnnmmf'



THE BURKISS WAY

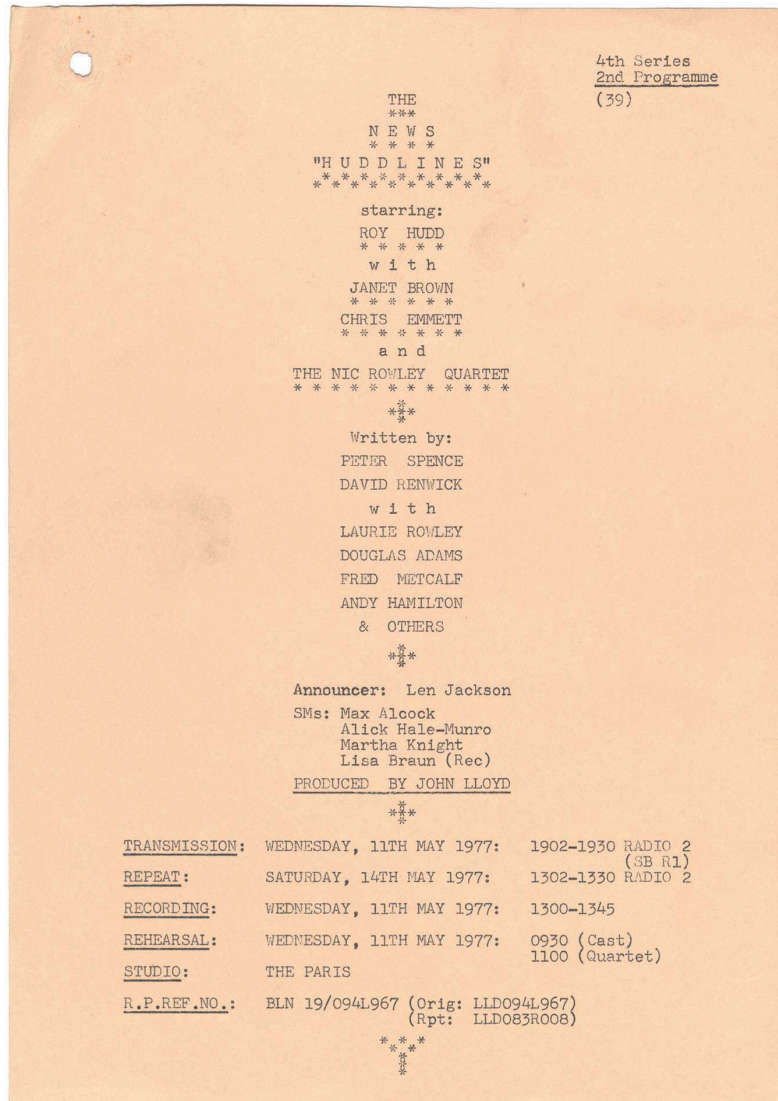


The main writers on the BBC radio sketch show *The Burkiss Way* were Andrew Marshall (later, TV's *2Point4 Children* and *Strange*) and David Renwick (*One Foot in the Grave* and *Jonathan Creek*), and the cast included Jo Kendall and Chris Emmett, who would go on to lend their voices to *The Hitchhiker's Guide*. Simon Brett (series producer) spotted something in Douglas's contributions to *The Burkiss Way* and invited him to lunch in February 1977 – a landmark moment in Douglas's career.



Douglas's collaboration on *The Burkiss Way* saw him create Eric von Contrick, the fictional author of *Spaceships of the Gods*. The character was a spoof of genuine Swiss author Erich von Däniken, who wrote the *Chariots of the Gods* books. (Many people believed Von Däniken also inspired the character Oolon Colluphid in *The Hitchhiker's Guide*. In actuality, Colluphid was drawn from another contentious author, John Marco Allegro and his book *The Sacred Mushroom and the Cross*.)

THE NEWS HUDDLINES



In May 1977, Douglas contributed to *The News Huddlines*, a radio vehicle for the irrepressible comedian and actor Roy Hudd, who later played Max Quordlepleen in the original *Hitchhiker's Guide* radio series in 1978 (a couple of the studio managers, Alick Hale-Munro and Lisa Braun, also went on to work on *Hitchhiker*). The producer was Douglas's old friend John Lloyd (see [page 75](#)). A satirical revue, *The News Huddlines* needed regular feeding with topical gags. In the extract opposite, the talk of the time was the problem of British football hooliganism.

FOOTBALL HOOLIGANS

D. ADAMS

1. BAND: CURRENT AFFAIRS SIG.

2. ROBIN DAY:
Chris Good evening. Well tonight as usual we shall be looking at a number of boring people doing boring things and trying to make them seem more interesting than they really are by asking them rude questions and getting them annoyed. And first we look at football hooliganism. Here in the studio with me is the Sports Minister, Mr. Dennis Howell, and also, to put the other side of the question Mr. A Soccer Hooligan.

3. COCKNEY:
Roy Er, well I just want to say that I had nothing to do with mashing that Bristol City supporter over the head with a mallet, that it wasn't me that saved off the ref's legs, and the grenades in my pocket were just a present for the wife's birthday.

4. DAY: Well I'm very glad to hear that, Mr. Howell. Now you claim that the new measure you took against hooliganism last Saturday went into operation with complete success.

/ROY over ...

1. HOWELL:
(cockney) Yes, well we very successfully managed to find out where the matches were on, we drove along to some of them extremely successfully, and then successfully managed to put up some notices asking all Chelsea and Manchester United fans if they wouldn't mind perhaps going away.

2. DAY: But Mr. Howell, I read in the papers that still 120 people were arrested.

3. HOWELL: Well not everyone managed to see the notices did they? And anyway that's a very small number when you consider that nearly 60 million people weren't arrested. Lots of people just stayed at home and watched tv or did the washing up, and only a few of those were arrested.

4. DAY: Yes, but what about the 18 people who were injured at matches?

5. HOWELL: Well they were the ones who saw the notices we very successfully put up, and bust a gut laughing. Or bust somebody else's gut laughing. Or of course bust somebody else's head with one of the notices.

6. DAY: So what do you feel you've achieved?

/ROY over ...

1. HOWELL: I think we made it very very clear in no uncertain terms to a lot of these thugs that this sort of behaviour can't go on for ever.

2. DAY: What makes you so sure?

3. HOWELL: Well eventually they'll grow old and die.

4. DAY: Well perhaps we can turn to you Mr. A. Soccer-Hooligan. Now I'm going to say this very slowly and carefully, so if there's anything you don't understand just ask. Now. H...e...l...l...o ...

5. HOOLIGAN: (REALLY AMAZINGLY GROSS) What? You watch it mate, none of your lip, I'll break you into little pieces mate (Etc. Ad lib)

6. FX: SOUND OF VIOLENT FIGHT

7. DAY: (AFTER A SUFFICIENT PERIOD OF THE VIOLENCE)
Well, whilst Mr. Hooligan is busy beating the hell out of his choir, perhaps you'd like to sum up for us Mr. Howell.

8. HOWELL: Well, many people say I should go back to my old job, because I did far more to prevent soccer violence when I was drought minister.

/CHRIS over ...

1. DAY: In what way?

2. HOWELL: Well, all the matches were rained off.

3. BAND: STING

(END)

On '42'

4. DEEP THOUGHT: All right. The Answer to Everything....

5. TWO: Yes...!

6. DEEP THOUGHT: Life, The Universe and Everything....

7. ONE: Yes....!

8. DEEP THOUGHT: Is....

9. ~~THREE~~ | Yes....!

10. DEEP THOUGHT: Is....

11. ONE/TWO/THREE: Yes....!!!

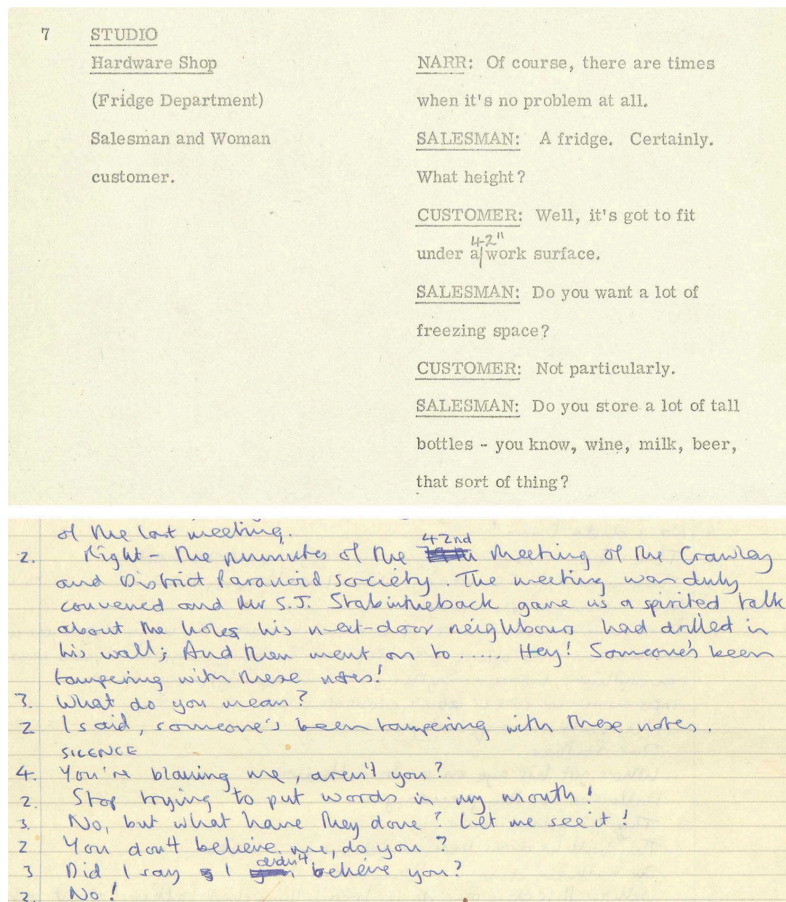
12. DEEP THOUGHT: ~~The answer is~~ 42.

PAUSE. ACTUALLY QUITE A LONG ONE

13. TWO: We're going to get lynched, you know that.

14. DEEP THOUGHT: It was a tough assignment. /ONE & THREE over...

On Wednesday 29 March 1978, BBC Radio 4 broadcast the fourth episode of *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* – in it the scene in the script below, which gave us '42'. This number is, according to the mighty computer Deep Thought (voiced originally by Geoff McGivern), the answer to 'Everything' (and the inspiration for the title of this book, of course). That broadcast unleashed intense and ongoing speculation as to what gave Douglas the idea to use 42. Over these pages, we muse on some of the evidence for 42 in Douglas's life, and look at the ways in which it kept reappearing throughout his career.



Some think that, having always been an avid reader, Douglas may have had a memory of childhood favourite Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865). In the book, it is stated that Rule 42 means 'All persons more than a mile high to leave the court'. Given Douglas's own self-consciousness about his height (not a mile, but a wow-worthy 6 feet 5 inches nonetheless), perhaps Carroll's attitude to the exceptionally tall touched a nerve that gave the number 42 a significance rather less relevant to other people.

Whatever the trigger, there is evidence in Douglas's archive that the number kept cropping up in various early jobs in his career. In July 1973, when he was working on John Cleese's business training film, Douglas witnessed a conversation that led to the choice of the number 42 – which then found its way into the script (above, top) as an amendment. A year later, in 1974, an Adams-Smith-Adams sketch for the *Hole in the Wall Gang* (see [page 78](#)) talks about the 'minutes of the 42nd meeting of the Crawley and

District Paranoid Society' (above, in the handwriting of Will Adams). It seems, then, that the Universe did indeed keep throwing the number 42 at Douglas. But there's more...

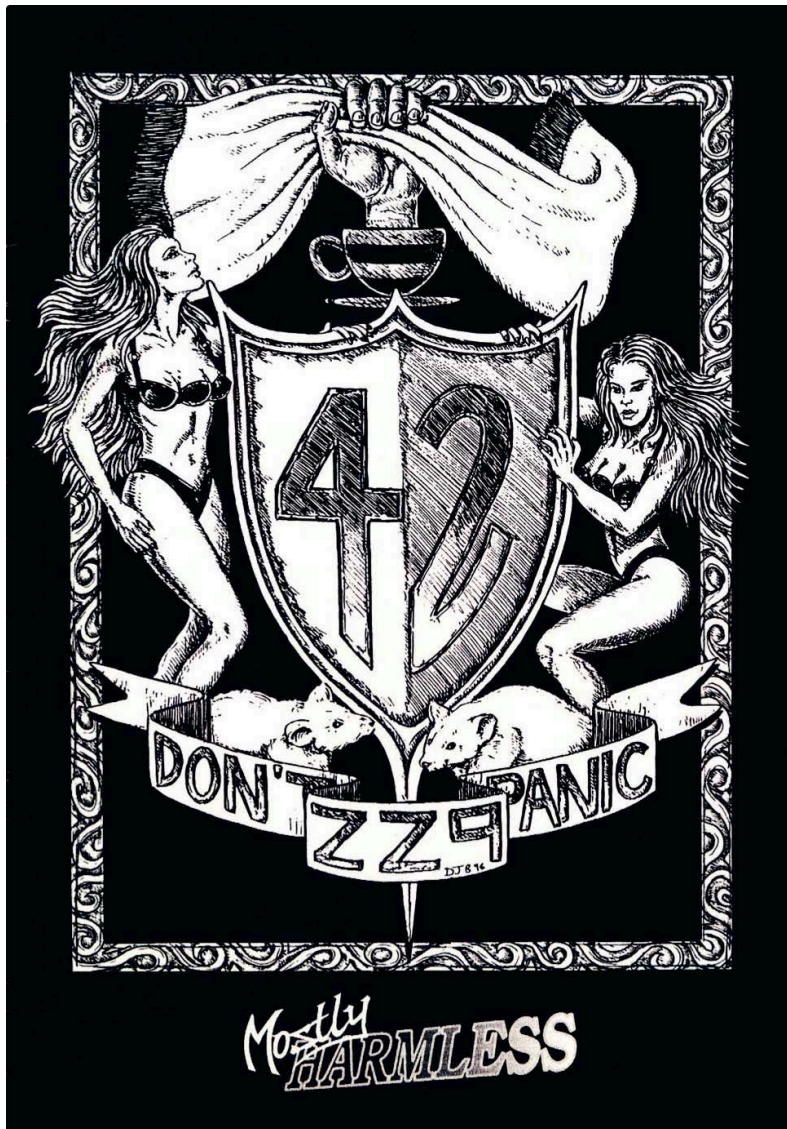
1. DEREK: Yes, I should say that Gungadin is probably a gratuitous reference to the Kipling character thrown in for incongruous effect - and very effective it is too. And 23 of course is probably the funniest of the two-figure numbers, though I know that recently the number 42 has greatly increased its popularity.

2. DAVID: Yes, I'm sure we can expect a lot of "23" jokes this afternoon - if indeed it's going to be a jokey sketch. I must say, I'm now more inclined to go along with your opinion that we may be in for something altogether more zany.

END OF SCRIPT

9. DEREK: 42 Logical Positivism Avenue.

In January 1977, the *Hole in the Wall Gang* script was modified for *The Burkiss Way* radio series (see [pages 94-5](#)), admitting that 'the number 42 has greatly increased its popularity'. Adams-Smith-Adams also used it towards the end of the sketch, as part of an address: '42 Logical Positivism Avenue' (below).



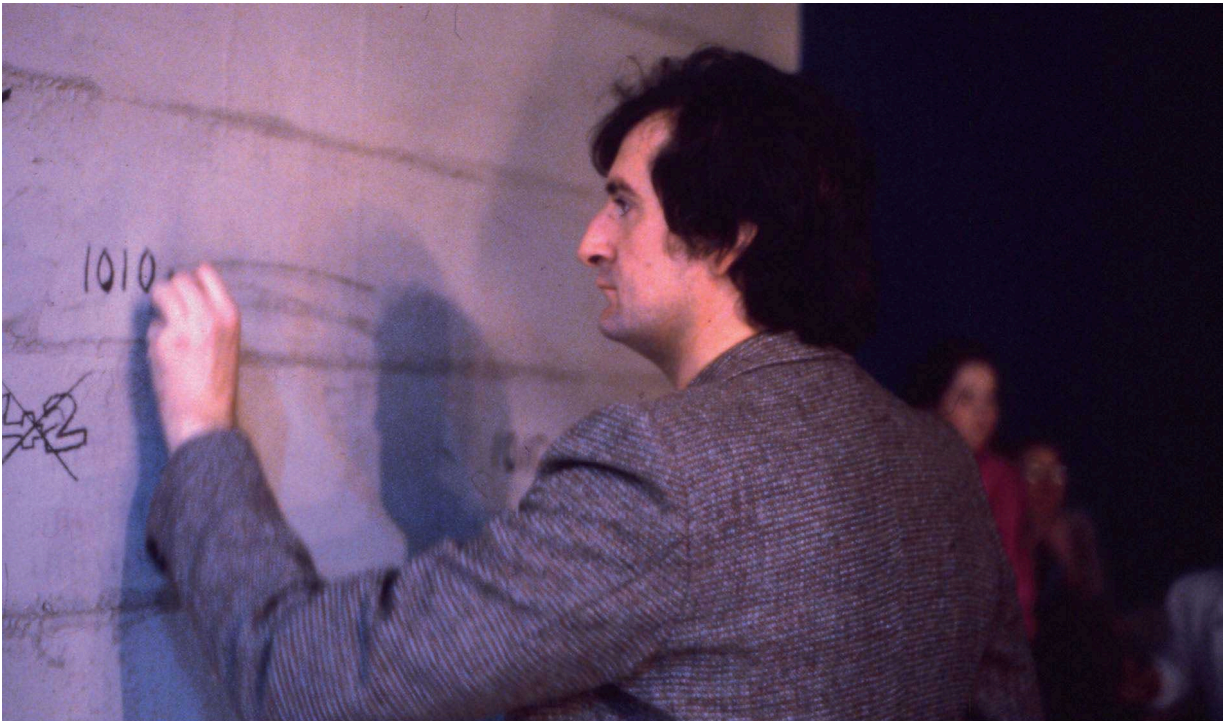
Despite these, and many, many other references, it was *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* that undoubtedly popularized the number in the minds of the public.

Some of the more outlandish theories expounded about its source include the oft-repeated assumption that Douglas, so famously into computers in later life, must have been referring to a designation of 42 as an asterisk in ASCII, meaning the answer could be 'anything you want it to be'. However, the chronology tells us that this theory can't be right. Douglas wrote the radio show and indeed drafted the first four *Hitchhiker* books on old manual typewriters, before he'd touched even a most basic word processor.

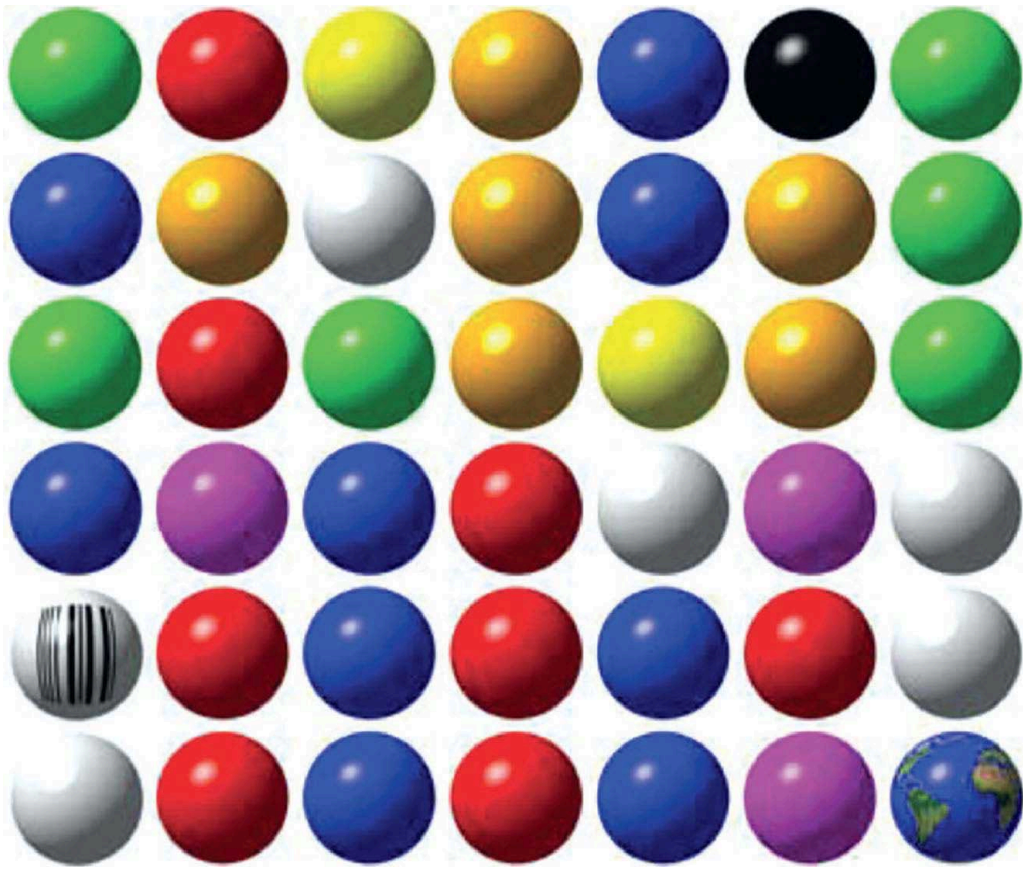
A later scene in *Hitchhiker* had a question wrongly

posed by letters on a Scrabble board: 'What do you get if you multiply six by nine?' Maths fans were eager to point out that 6×9 – in base 13 – is 42, whereupon Douglas replied that that was also nonsense, as he didn't write gags in base 13.

For over four decades, Douglas Adams fans have been perpetuating the mystery of 42. ZZ9 Plural Z Alpha, the official *Hitchhiker's Guide* appreciation society, used the number as part of their club logo, as seen on the cover of their flagship fanzine, *Mostly Harmless* (right).



In 1980, a BBC set designer had prepared a surface of 'breeze blocks' in vacuum-formed plastic, representing the wall of a bunker, where supposedly some desperate, unnamed survivor of an apocalypse had repeatedly scrawled '42'. As a young member of the animation team visiting the set, writer and filmmaker Kevin Jon Davies was offered a piece of charcoal and told, 'Just graffiti forty-twos on the wall in as many different ways as you can.' Unnerved by the whole TV studio watching, he wavered. Douglas Adams stepped forward: 'I'll do it!' And so he did. He even wrote it in binary...

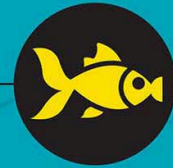


In the days before Photoshop, *The Illustrated Hitchhiker's Guide* (1994) was an epic feat in early digital image manipulation. For a page intended to be full of 42s, Douglas designed a puzzle on one of his many Apple Macs that consisted of a pattern of coloured snooker balls (right). Apparently, the puzzle was coded with umpteen different 42s. There are many online theories as to how, although it seems Douglas never did reveal the complete answer (at least not publicly).

Paul Bonner Kennington House

Peter Whitmore. 2. Ronnies.

Terry Hughes - New Year



Peter De Vries - books

FOUR

Deep

Thoughts

Story of two men/man & woman?

...who simply find
a manuscript in their backgarden
- maybe a diary.

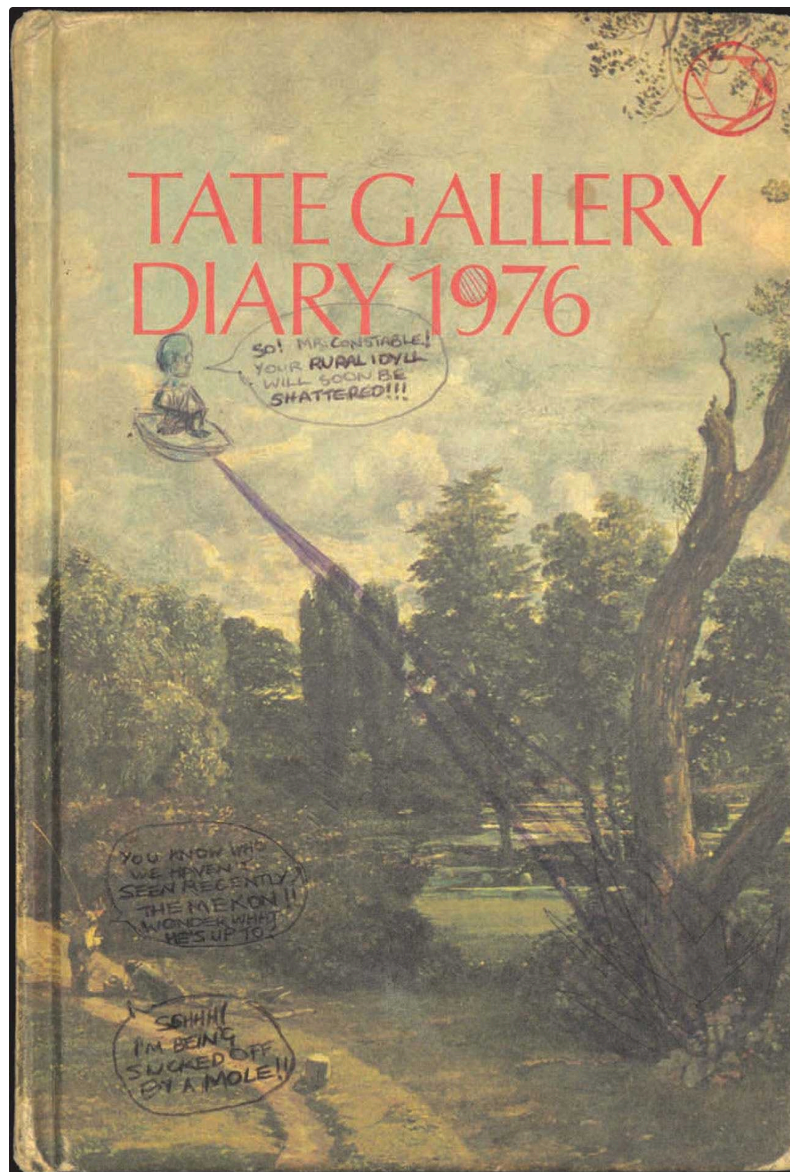
The occupant is dead (why?)

They investigate it, take it...

and that's where your story
starts.

Ron Davidson

2900



In 1976, Douglas wrote in his notebook, 'I certainly don't intend to spend my life being professionally funny. It's certainly not something I envisage as a career.' This chapter collects some of the early ideas for stories Douglas noted down – as well as some home truths from the powers that be!

From Joker's Wild
- Post Office: letter without money for 2
Santas, letter asking for £10
They collect £19.
Man writes back, says thanks to Santa,
and upset about missing pound
'Thrown at the Post Office'.

Death of Dog. Story from Ron.
Family's (large & beloved) Labrador dog dies,
and they don't know what to do with the body,
so Ron agreed to look after it for a day whilst
they decide (they had left it on the bed!).
Ron puts it on the deep freeze in a large
black plastic bag. Mum moves it to the
greenhouse - full of rubbish & tools and things.
Their daughter arrives to see it. Mum sends
her off to get torch, and meanwhile dashes off
to get a large dog - make it more presentable.
Daughter comes back, puts pillow under head
and stands and looks at it for fifteen minutes.

Cannibal ideas.

Man eats father whilst drunk.
- remark - 'he's got a lot of his father in him'.

Cows being milked by confidence tricksters.

Meeting of Perenoids

Mum has a tendency for incoherence in a restaurant
to talk as if it is only by some accident
that she is a customer and talks of what
the waitresses are doing, thinking, and what is
going on in the kitchen.

Things to talk about - box of matches.
Ridiculous door.

Science fiction story.

Man goes to friend; reveals that
he is in fact an alien (they have known
each other many years), he must now leave
the earth which is threatened with
extinction, and offer to take his friend with him.

This page from Douglas's notebook dating from around 1974/5 contains intriguing early story musings. The last on the page (entitled 'Science Fiction Story') seems to record the seeds of an idea that to any Douglas Adams fan will seem instantly recognizable as perhaps a first foray into the tale that would become *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*.

From Joker's Wild

– Post office workers collect money for a 'Santa' letter asking for £20.

They collect £19.

Man writes back, says thanks to Santa and upset about missing pound 'Thieves at the Post Office.'

Death of Dog. Story from Ron.*

Family's large and beloved Labrador dog dies and they don't know what to do with the body, so Ron agreed to look after it for a day whilst they decide (they had left it on the bed!). Ron puts it on their deep freezer in 2 large black plastic bags. Mum moves it to the greenhouse – full of rubbish + tools and things. Then daughter arrives to see it. Mum sends her off to get torch, and meanwhile dashes to re-arrange dog – make it more presentable. Daughter comes back, puts pillow under head and stands and looks at it for fifteen minutes.

Cannibal idea.

Man eats father whilst drunk.

– remark – 'He's got a lot of his father in him.'

Cows being milked by confidence tricksters.

Meeting of Paranoids

Mum has a tendency for instance in a restaurant to talk as if it is only by some accident that she is a customer and talks of what the waitresses are doing, thinking, and what is going on in the kitchen.

Things to talk about – box of matches.

Ridiculous door.

Science fiction story.

Man goes to friend; reveals that he is in fact an alien (they have known each other many years), he must now leave the Earth which is threatened with extinction and offers to take his friend with him.

** Ron was Douglas's stepfather, a vet.*



JILL FOSTER LTD
88 Rannoch Road
London W.6
01-385 6947

15 March 1976

Douglas Adams Esq
c/o Dr Harry Porter
13 Warkworth Street
Cambridge

Dear Douglas:

Your "Dr Who" outline has, I'm afraid, been spurned by Philip Hinchcliffe. I can do no better than quote "... The idea of the Doctor investigating a breach of the space-time continuum, with the help of the Time Lords, is not enough. The story lacks a villain and, therefore, any dramatic conflict. Please don't think I am averse to encouraging new writers for the programme. We are using one this season. But we do need greater evidence than this of real talent, and preferably in the form of a complete script." Sadly, this isn't an idea we can place elsewhere, so I am returning it.

As the launching of my company fast approaches I am preparing a client list - which in fact will be in booklet form with a page for each client. I would like from you a short piece giving details of what you've done and anything else you think relevant remembering it is aimed at television, theatre, radio and film producers and publishers. It needs to give as much information in as little space as possible - just a list if you like. Please.

Yours,

Jill

Directors: Jill Foster · Malcolm Hamer

Reg. Office: 19 Harley St., W1N 2DT

Script editor Robert Holmes and series producer Philip Hinchcliffe formally rejected an early draft of Douglas's idea for the long-running BBC TV sci-fi series *Doctor Who*, called (at that point) 'The Krikkitmen'. Jill Foster, Douglas's agent, wrote to Douglas, then staying in Cambridge, to tell him the bad news (above), quoting the somewhat frank words of the rejection: 'we do need greater evidence than this of real talent'.

Notes

Paul Bonner Kensington House

Peter Whitmore. 2. Ronnies.

Terry Hughes - New Year show.

Peter De Vries - books -

Story of two men/man + woman?
or whatever who simply find
a spacecraft in their backgarden
- maybe an enormous one.
The occupants are dead (why?)
They investigate it, take it...
and that's where your story
starts.

Ron Davidson.
2900

These few notes (middle of the page) for a story idea in the back of Douglas's 1977 diary suggest he really wanted to get his protagonists off the planet as soon as possible! The note reads: 'Story of two men/man & woman? Or whatever who simply find a spacecraft in their backgarden - maybe an enormous one. The occupants are dead (why?) They investigate it, take off... and that's where your story starts.'

ALL AT SEA

When I graduated I decided I would give myself
a couple of years or so to try my hand at
earning a living as a freelance ^{comedy} scriptwriter, which was
a hobby I'd ~~been~~ particularly enjoyed at Cambridge.
~~I achieved a fair measure of success in the time,~~
~~and it's been fun as a short term venture. I certainly~~
~~I don't intend to spend the rest of my life being~~
~~professionally funny. It's certainly not something I~~
~~envisage as a career. In looking for a career I'm~~
~~quite ~~deliberately~~ trying to avoid anything further~~
~~in the world of entertainment.~~

Having pursued it full time to the hilt, and ^{achieved} enjoyed
a fair measure of success, I've come to feel that
~~on the whole looking in~~ television entertainment
is ^{95%} ~~pretty~~ useless and trivial activity, and since I
am (I hope) intelligent, educated and ambitious, it's
time I turned my to something more productive.

I'm choosing a career in commerce in general, and
P.O. in particular, because I would like to be
~~directly involved in the problem of generating wealth~~
 ~~tackling tackling the problems of the generation~~
the job of generating wealth, ~~which is one of the main~~
problems the world is facing at the moment, and
I ~~would~~ also want the opportunity to do a lot
of work and travel abroad.

Douglas went through a period of disenchantment with writing and made several attempts at getting a more regular job. This letter, from his archive, is a draft application for a post as a shipping clerk with P&O in Hong Kong. How genuine were his stated intentions to quit comedy writing? Was this for real, or just intended to appease the prospective employer or the Jobcentre? In any case, he certainly proved, years later, that he could generate wealth – and he did in fact travel the world. They say it's darkest just before the dawn.

When I graduated, I decided I would give myself a couple of years or so to try my hand at earning a living as a freelance comedy scriptwriter, which was a hobby I'd ~~been~~ particularly enjoyed at Cambridge.

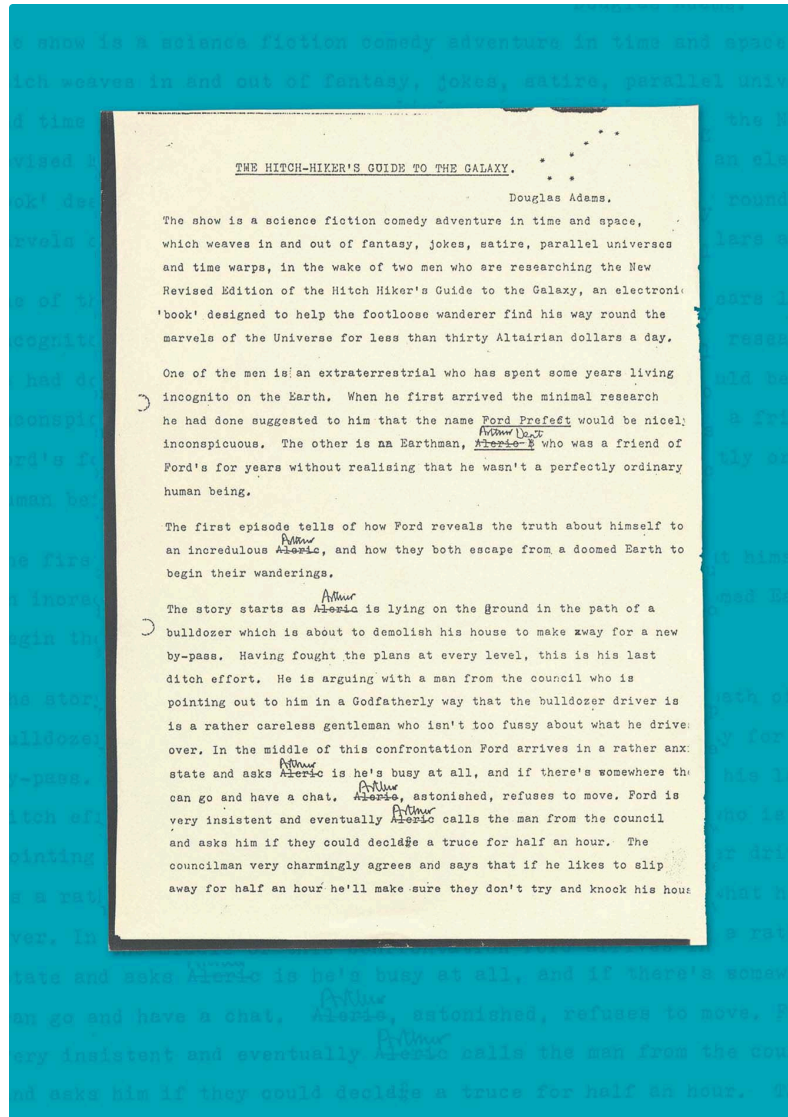
~~I achieved a fair measure of success in the time, and it's been fun as a short term venture. I certainly don't intend to spend the rest of my life being professionally funny. It's certainly not something I envisage as a career. In looking for a career I'm quite deliberately trying to avoid anything further in the world of entertainment.~~

Having pushed it full time to the hilt, and achieved a fair measure of success, I've come to feel that ~~on the whole~~, working in television entertainment is 95% a useless and trivial activity, and since I am (I hope) intelligent, educated and ambitious, it's time I turned ~~my~~ to something more productive.

I'm choosing a career in commerce in general, and P&O in particular, because I would like to be ~~directly~~ involved in ~~the problem of generating wealth tackling tackling the problem of the generation~~ the job of generating wealth, ~~which is one of the main problem the~~ world is facing ~~at the moment~~, and I ~~would~~ also want the opportunity ~~to do a lot for a~~ of work and travel abroad.



A COMEDY ADVENTURE IN TIME AND SPACE



Having almost given up on comedy, it would have been a shame if Douglas had not been given one more chance by BBC radio producer Simon Brett. This is the original outline Douglas submitted for the storyline that would eventually spawn several radio series, many stage plays, LP records, a BBC TV series, five or six books, one long-gestated Hollywood-funded movie and an official towel! (Note that Arthur Dent here is still called 'Aleric B' until Douglas amended his name.)

till he gets back, word of honour. Ford and ^{Arthur}~~Alexis~~ repair to a nearby pub, where Ford asks ^{Arthur}~~Alexis~~ how he would react if he told him that he wasn't from Guildford at all but from a small planet in the vicinity of Betelgeuse.

As soon as they're out of the way the councilman orders the demolition ceremony to start. A local lady dignitary makes a very moving speech about how wonderful life will suddenly become as soon as the bypass is built, and swings a bottle of champagne against the bulldozer, which moves in for the kill.

○ The sound of the crashing building reaches ^{Arthur}~~Alexis~~ who is in the middle of not believing a word that Ford is telling him, and he charges back to his ex-house shouting about what a naughty world we live in.

At that moment the sky is suddenly torn apart by the scream of jets, and a fleet of flying saucers streak towards the Earth. As everyone flees in panic an unearthly voice rings through the air announcing the due to redevelopment of this sector of the galaxy they are building a new hyperspace bypass and the Earth will unfortunately have to be ~~xxxx~~ demolished. In answer to appalled cries of protest the voice says that the plans have ^{been} on public display in the planning office in Alpha Centauri for ten years, so it's far too late to start making a fuss now. He orders the demolition to start. A low rumble slowly builds into an earshattering explosion, followed by silence.

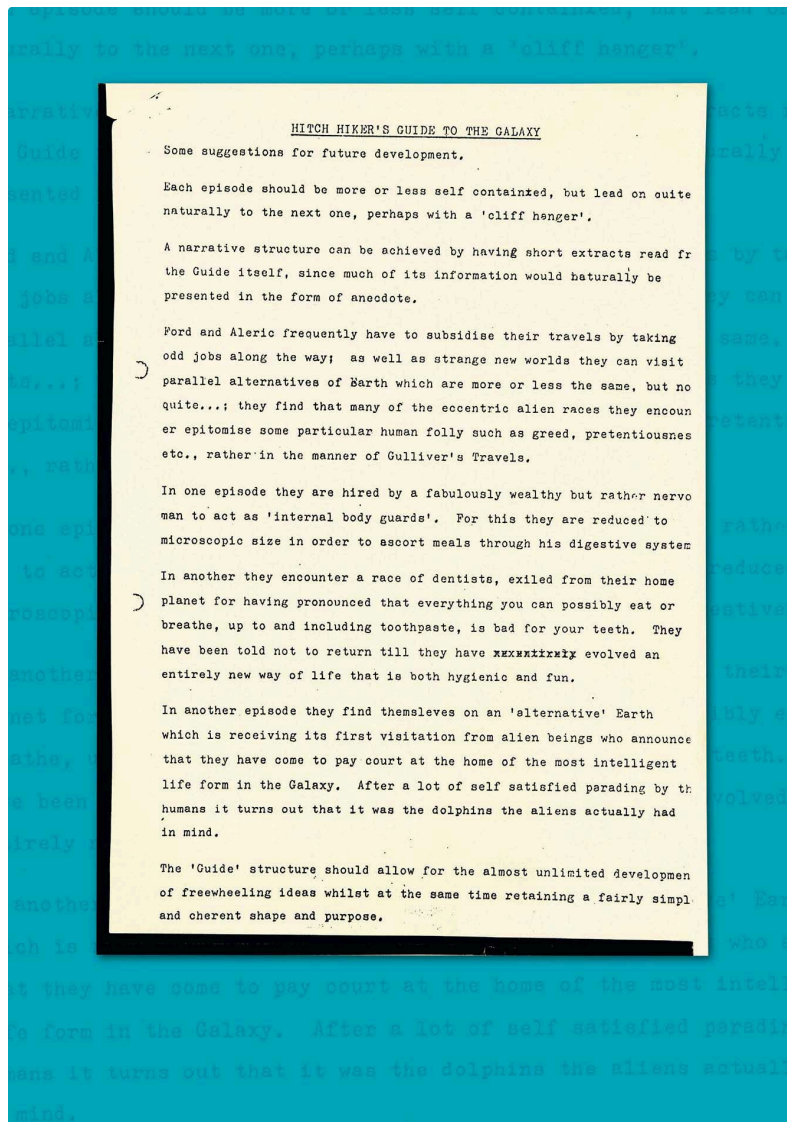
k

^{Arthur}~~Alexis~~ wakes, not knowing where he is. Ford tells him they've managed to get a lift aboard one of the ships of the Vogan Constructor Fleet. Not to worry about the Earth, he says, there are an infinite multiplicity of parallel universes in which the Earth is still alive and well. He explains how they got on the ship by producing a copy of an electronic book called the Hitch Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy. Under the entry marked 'Vogan Constructors' it gives detailed instructions as to the best way of hitching a ride from one of their ships - you have to

play on Vagon psychology, which it describes. Ford explains that it's his job to research a new edition of the book, which is now a little out of date. Would ^{Arthur}Alerio like to accompany him in the task? ^{Arthur}Alerio only wants to get back to Earth, or at least, it's nearest equivalent. However, he is fascinated to browse through this strange book. He is suddenly appalled when he discovers ~~xx~~ Earth's entry. Though the book is over a million pages long, the inhabitants of the Earth only warrant a one word entry - 'Harmless'. Ford, rather embarrassed, explains that the reason he had been on Earth was to gather a bit more material. He'd had a bit of an argument with the editor over it, but finally he'd been allowed to expand the entry to 'Mostly harmless'. They're very short of space.

^{Arthur}~~Alerio~~ is stung to the quick. He agrees to go with Ford.

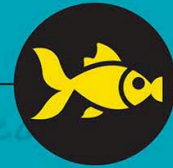
END OF EPISODE ONE.



This page suggests a few blind alleys our heroes might have ventured down, in storylines which (mostly) were never ultimately explored. The BBC sat on this outline for a while, before committing to the series. But first, Douglas had an appointment with a famous time-traveller...

Dr Who.

- Travel forward.



Caught in 'time-pocket'.
Land again on earth.

Everything - slow motion - (20y)

Find berner - where? Land

~~the~~ home-spherical - mirror.

- Inside turn out to

be a Saviour. - i.e, have

Doctor Who

Because humans are a re-

-self control. These people,

show are a community, take each

is a cell, and see each o-

thing! an image of the community

Come from a different spec-

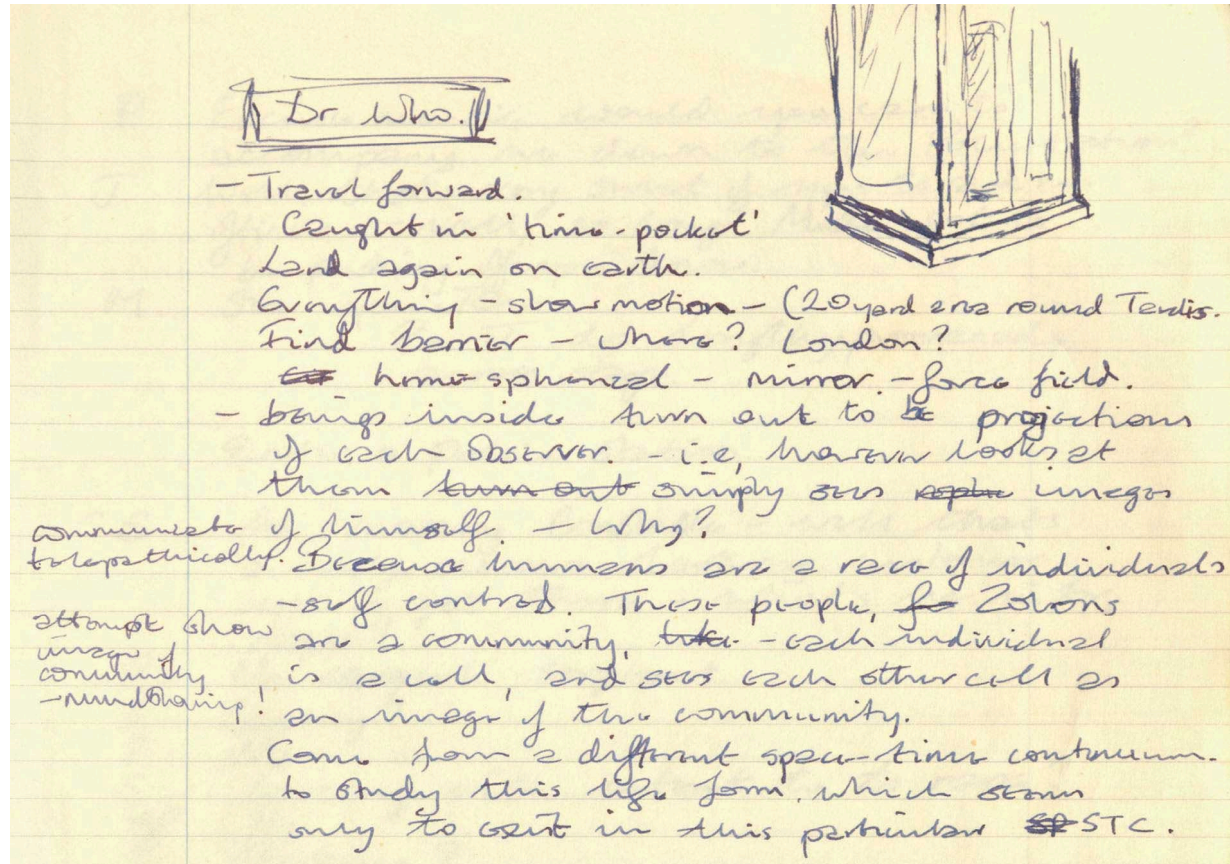
to study this life form, wh-

only to exist in this part



Douglas's fertile imagination for sci-fi was evident during school and university. He wanted to write for the BBC's long-running science fiction series *Doctor Who*. In the mid-1970s, after years of dreaming, he was invited to contribute the first of three stories to the series – and even to apply for a job on the team.

EARLY IDEAS



As far back as prep school at Brentford, Douglas had written stories about Daleks being powered by Rice Krispies, for himself and his friends to perform on a tape recorder. Later, in 1972, while on holiday with friends from university, he was still dabbling with ideas for the series. His notebook from the holiday provides a permanent record of some of the notions he dreamed up (below), as well as his doodles of the Tardis.

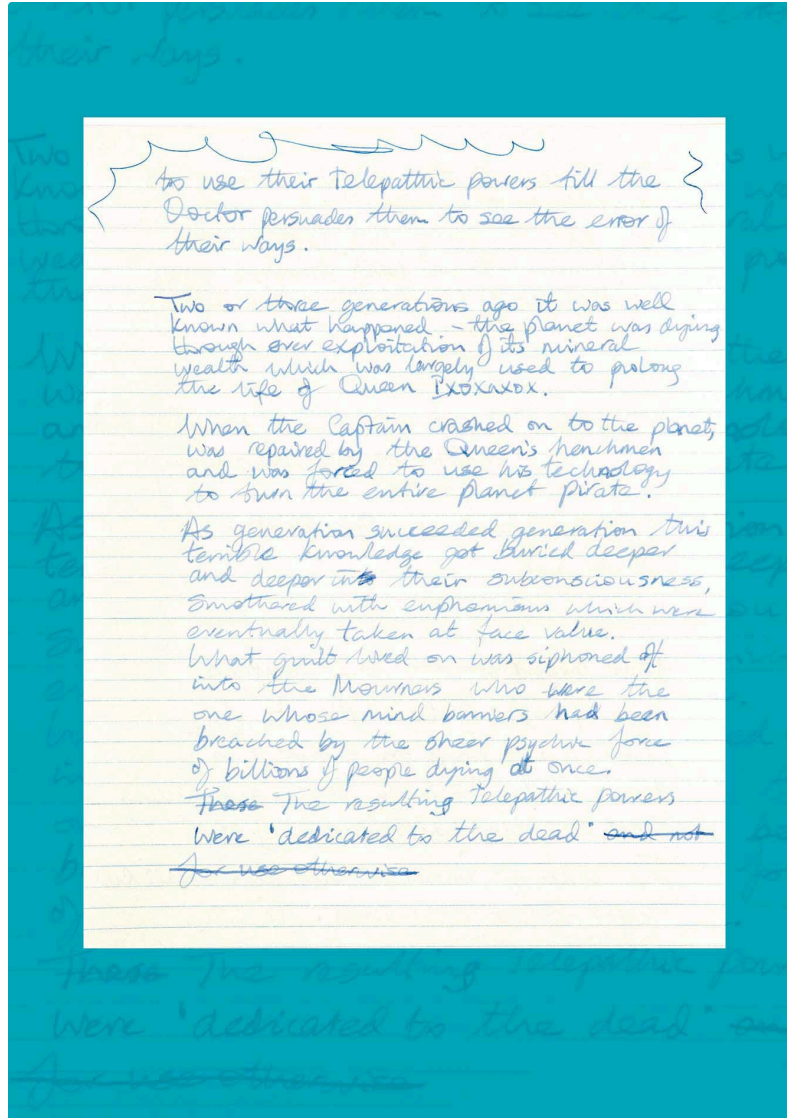
Dr Who

- Travel forward.
- Caught in 'time pocket'
- Land again on Earth.
- Everything - slow motion - (20 yard area round Tardis Find barrier - where? London?
- Home spherical - mirror - force field.

– beings inside turn out to be projections of each observer – i.e. whoever looks at them simply sees images of himself – Why?
[margin] Communicate telepathically Because humans are a race of individuals – self-centred. These people Zolons are a community – each individual is a cell and sees each other cell as an image of the community.
[margin] Attempt to show image of community – mindblowing!
Come from a different space-time continuum to study this life form which seems only to exist in this particular STC.



SCOPING THE PIRATE PLANET



Having spent years toying with the idea of working on *Doctor Who*, in summer 1977 Douglas was finally commissioned to write for the series a four-part story that became known as *The Pirate Planet*. In Douglas's vision, the story saw a half-robotic Pirate Captain piloting his hollow planet to surround other planets, plundering their rich mineral deposits and destroying their populations, all to appease his Queen Ixoxaxox (later simplified to Xanxia).

The Captain always was a pirate,
using bigger and bigger, grander & grander
ships - and then going off to spend the
money & have a wonderful time.

Dreadful old ~~the~~ coarse alien monster
having great trouble holding itself
together - trying to ~~join~~

Maybe she was the Queen of this
planet.

The Captain used to use this
technique to capture spaceships.

Then his spaceship crashed onto
a barren ~~planet~~ deserted planet
which had been mined hollow.

There was nothing left - all the people
had died.

Only Ixoxaxox was left,
expecting to die soon.

One could make ~~a few~~ a few composite
people - rescue the captain, put

Time Dam.

The people of his own planet ('The Mourners', later changed to 'Mentiads') were becoming aware of the toll. The Doctor and an apprentice Time Lord called Gravity (eventually known as Lady Romana) arrive to investigate. The story eventually aired on BBC One in September/October 1978. The many notes in Douglas's archive (above, opposite and over the following two pages) show the thought he put into the complexities of the plot, before setting it out scene by scene (see [pages 121-6](#)).

I suppose pt One must
end in some mental
attack on the Doctor
by the Monks.

xiv

Tease:
Should involve
Captain

Then first two episodes
are largely concerned
with the Monks
- Gravity is captured by
them to be a sacrifice,
Pratix is drawn to them
as an initiate.

End of Part Two involves
Pratix about to betray Gravity
immediately prior to which
the Doctor has been down
the mineshaft and
discovered Calufrax.

"I think it's time we
paid our respects to the
Captain"

So in Part Gravity
should only be captured
 $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{2}{3}$ way through
pt 2.

But we must
find some way to
connect events
on the bridge
to what else is
going on before
3rd episode.

Like more
~~mineral~~ reports
reports
being brought
to the Captain
- mining results,
power requirements
Mention of Earth

Mention of mechanical
breakdown -
Doctor's still
required,

Gravity crushed by diamond.

The part of the Mechanism that has
been drawn out can only be replaced
by mining the earth.

The part of the Mechanism that has
been drawn out can only be replaced
by mining the Earth.

What is the future machine used
on the Doctor?



THE PIRATE PLANET - SCENE BY SCENE

227-6493 (4111)

DOCTOR WHO
and the PIRATE PLANET.

1. ~~View over the desert to the city.~~
~~For behind the city are the mountains.~~
High in the mountains overlooking the city is The Bridge.
2. The Bridge. In the ~~far~~ foreground is the back of a highback chair.
~~All we can see of its occupant is the right arm.~~
A technician is presenting a report by
() In the chair is the Captain, though from this angle all we can see is his right arm.

A technician is presenting a report ~~so~~ that all useful mineral deposits have now been mined and ~~used~~, and that new supplies of others must now be found if power levels are to be maintained.

The Captain ascertains that all preparations for ~~the~~ finding of these minerals have been made and is shown some charts. The name Calufrax is mentioned.
() "Very good" he says "then we are now ready to proclaim the ~~dawning~~ of a New Golden Age of Prosperity!" ~~Hand~~ reads out. It is a mechanical framework.
3. The City. People dressed in fine clothes looking prosperous and well are going about ~~their~~ their business. Dotted around are a few guards who are vaguely piratical in their bearing. One of them has received a message. He stands up in the middle of the square and grandly proclaims that the Captain has announced the dawning of a new Golden Age of Prosperity. This is greeted with cheers and excitement - though it is a little forced somehow?

() We can make the announcement?

Circle within circle.

Once Douglas had sketched out the initial scope of his story, he created a detailed outline of each episode – all by hand, in numbered, scene-by-scene breakdown. His notes for Episode 1 of *The Pirate Planet* are above and over the following pages.

4. Momentary cut away to an underground chamber. ~~the~~ A group of figures dressed in monk-like garb stand huddled in a group. They wear monk-like garb which is white with red designs that look like ~~dripping blood~~ a stylisation of dripping blood. They are ~~the~~ Mourners. One word is ~~missed~~ - "Watch!"
5. The scene dissolves, and we are back with the crowd on the street - a blur round the edge of the picture to suggest that this is what the Mourners are somehow watching.
- () In the crowd is Pralix. He is as splendidly dressed as the others, but seems thin and wasted.
- He greets the announcement of the new Golden Age with horror, and fights his way out of the crowd and runs away down the street. The crowd is waiting for an omen in the sky - and all stare upwards.
6. The Mourning Chambers. The Mourners are still focussing telepathically on Pralix in his terrified flight.
- () "Yes," they agree "we have found another one."
7. The Tardis. The Doctor + Gravity are on their way to the planet of Calufrax to collect the precious Tantaros Stone, a sacred Jewel, which is one of the Six Keys.
- As the Tardis attempts to materialize all hell breaks loose and the Tardis bucks about uncontrollably.
- ~~The~~ Doctor backs off, effects some repairs and tries again. This time successfully.

The first glimpse of the Doctor (at the time played by Tom Baker) in the episode comes in Douglas's Scene 7 - he's on his way to collect a 'Sacred Jewel' from the planet Calufrax when 'all hell breaks loose and the Tardis bucks about uncontrollably'.

8 They have landed on the edge of the city.
In every other direction is desert.
"I must have made a mistake," says the
Doctor, "this isn't Calufrax."

9 The Bridge. The Captain (whom we still
~~don't~~ actually see) is angry and worried. What
has gone wrong? A nurse soothes him
The technician assures him that ~~everything has~~
~~been accomplished~~ safely. Some minor circuits have
blown and will need to be replaced but
otherwise everything is ~~according~~ ^{satisfactory} to plan.

10 The Mourning Chambers. The Mourners
are in the grip of some terrible mental
pain and anguish, but are managing
to perform some kind of ritual and chant
in front of an altar which bears
an image of two large concentric circles.
Superimposed is ~~a~~ ~~on~~ this picture
is Palix lying on a bed howling
in fear and agony. Hands fly helplessly
to soothe and quieten him. Something in
the rhythm of his cries ~~is~~ synchronises
with the chanting of the Mourners.

11 The Tardis. The Doctor is busy
checking all his calculations to see
~~how he if he's made an error~~ - but
he can find no error.
Gravity asks what is wrong.
The Doctor doesn't know. The only thing
he knows for certain is that this isn't
the same planet that was here ten minutes
ago.

13. Pralix's House. Pralix is still howling with honor whilst his ~~father & grandfather~~ ^{brother}, Kimm Balaton and Kimm ^{brother} try to soothe him. They are clearly worried that he might be overheard and carry him into an inner chamber.

Mulor arrives at the house. Speaking with guarded irony he says that the Captain has proclaimed the Dawn of yet another Golden Age of Prosperity: the last one was only six months ago.

- Nevertheless the sounds of general rejoicing is heard in the streets - the omens have been seen in the ~~sky~~ sky. The news is superfluous. Balaton + Kimm don't need to see the omens or hear the official proclamations to know about the New Ages. Everytime it happens, Pralix goes stark mad.

At that moment a terrible cry comes from Pralix - "All dead, all dead..."

- 14. Meanwhile the Doctor + Gravity are unobtrusively picking their way through the streets, wondering what all the celebrations are about, and why the people need such large practical looking guards standing about the place to help them ~~celebrate~~ celebrate.

A man comes and asks the Doctor if he wants any diamonds or rubies at all. The Doctor thanks him very much, offering him some jelly babies in return, and asks him what's happening. The man tells him about the New Golden Age of Prosperity and the Omens in the sky and leaves with a handful of jellybabies. The Doctor takes out his ~~glass~~ telescope, but can see no omens in the sky - neither can he

see the horrified reactions of people around him who see the telescope and run.

Gravity also looks through the telescope, peering about trying to find any kind of a sign.

The man with the jellybabies is walking down the street, looking at them in fascination. A rod smashes down on his hand.

"Where did you get those?" demands a guard.

The Doctor examines the diamonds and rubies and is astonished to discover that they are genuine. "But where" he muses "is Caluprex?"

15. The House. Palix's delirium has subsided and he is now sleeping. Muder wants to know what it all means. ~~The elder men are guarded in their replies, they~~
how can they just get richer and richer? Where does it all come from? Surely somebody somewhere must be getting poorer. What about Palix - where does he fit in?

The elder men quite clearly know something that he doesn't, and they find the conversation embarrassing in some peculiar way, almost as if a Victorian father was being asked about sex.

Their main worry is not to rock the boat - they must keep quiet about Palix, keep him out of sight, or he will be taken away by the Mourners.

Palix stirs slightly

16. The Mourning Chambers.
The Mourners have finished their ritual. Their minds are focussed on Palix. They form a procession, and lead out of the labyrinthine tunnels which bring them out in the foothills of the Mountain.
17. They file down towards the city. They are going to get Palix.

17. The House. Mulor is still faithfully questioning Balaton + Kimms. Their attitude is that life is much simpler and safer not to ask questions. They are clearly terrified of the Mourners coming to take Valix. At that moment the door opens - they all freeze in horror - but it's only the Doctor. "Excuse me" he says - "but are you sure this planet is meant to be here?"

18. The House: Mulor and Kimms are still faithfully debating their incomprehensible way of life. Balaton merely advises caution - let sleeping dogs lie. If they make a fuss they will call attention to Valix and the Mourners will come to get him.

Mulor angrily insists that he's not frightened of the Mourners. Who are they anyway, what are they there for, why does everyone treat them ~~with~~ as fanatics and devils?

Despite his show of contempt he freezes with horror along with the others when the door suddenly opens...

But it's not the Mourners, it's the Doctor. "Excuse me" he says "but are you sure this planet is meant to be here?"

19. Out in the street guards converge on Gravity who is still peering about with the telescope. Very roughly they arrest her for a grave breach of the peace, which seems to have it appears that telescopes are taboo.

Douglas's initial four episodes were noted for their witty dialogue and clever ideas, which is probably why, in 1978, script editor Anthony Read recommended Douglas as his replacement. This was to be some (much-needed at the time) full-time employment for just over a year. In his notebook, Douglas appears to have written a draft paragraph (below) for the formal BBC job application. The cleaned-up text, once the crossings out have been taken into account, reads: 'Though I do have a lot of writing work on my plate at the moment, and quite clearly would like to continue to write, I really need the challenge of a practical job of work to do working with other people and helping to develop other people's ideas as well as my own.'

Of course, he landed the job successfully and took up the reins in October 1978. However, once he was immersed in the practicality of writing for *Doctor Who*, *Hitchhiker's Guide* also took off – and the two weren't compatible. Douglas left the BBC's permanent role in late 1979 to focus on his own endeavours.

JOB OFFER

Though I do have a lot of writing work on my plate at the moment, and am keen to continue this side of my career -

Though I do have a lot of writing work on my plate at the moment, and want to continue to write and quite clearly would like to continue ~~to work on my~~ ^{to work on my} ~~university~~. I am very keen that to write, I really need the challenge of a practical job of work to do working with other people and helping to develop other people's ideas as well as my own.

And not only that - but

ADDENDUM: Years later Douglas grew weary of answering fans' esoteric questions about his time on *Doctor Who*. 'The whole point of *Doctor Who*,' he joked, 'is that if you take the second letter of all the episodes over the last twenty years of broadcast and run them together backwards, the original lost city of Atlantis is revealed.' But Douglas reserved a lot of affection for Tom Baker, the actor playing the role of The Doctor back in his day. They worked together again in 1990 on Douglas's fantasy documentary about the future of interactive media, *Hyperland*. In 1995 he said of Baker, 'He's one of the world's great madmen and I thoroughly enjoyed his company, I must say.'

SIX

The Guide



"THE HITCH-HIKER'S GUIDE TO THE GALAXY"

by: DOUGLAS ADAMS

starring PETER JONES as The Book

with

RICHARD VERNON as Slartibartfast

SIMON JONES as Arthur Dent

GEOFFREY MCGIVERN as Ford Prefect & Deep Thought

MARK WING-DAVEY as Zaphod Beeblebrox

SUSAN SHERIDAN as Trillian

JONATHAN ADAMS as Majikthise
Benjy Mouse
& Cheer-Leader

RAY HASSETT as 'One'
Bang-Bang & P.A. Voice

JAMES BROADBENT as Vroomfondel
& Shooty

JEREMY BROWNE as 'Two'
Frankie Mouse
& Archive Voice

PRODUCED BY: GEOFFREY PERKINS
.....

Special effects by the Radiophonic Workshop

=====

REHEARSAL: TUESDAY 20TH DECEMBER 1977 : 1000-1800 PARIS STUDIO

RECORDING: TUESDAY 20TH DECEMBER 1977 : 1000-1800

PROGRAMME NUMBER: (SLN51) HLD095K849 tape: SLN51/095K849

TRANSMISSION: WEDS 29.03.78 : 2230-2300 : RL

Repeat: 64N 30.03.78 : 1100-1130 : RL

(repeat number:)

=====

Launched late one night on BBC Radio 4, *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* soon became a play, novels, vinyl, a TV series, computer games and even a bath towel. Here are some of the treasures that underpin its meteoric rise to fame.

INTRODUCING *THE HITCHHIKER'S GUIDE TO THE GALAXY*

tel: 01-263-3340
or 01-580-4468 ex 4884 or 3231.

20, Kingsdown Rd.,
London N19.
21 Feb 78.

Dear David Pirie,

I'm writing to give you a little information on a radio programme which might interest you. Basic details first - it's called 'The Hitch Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy' and it starts its six week series on March 8th at 10.30pm on Radio 4, in stereo. It supposedly tells the story of a couple of people who are bumming round the Universe researching the new revised edition of the Hitch Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy - the original edition is ~~xx~~ terribly inaccurate and out of date, partly because its editors spent most of their time out of their minds on Pan Galactic Gargle Blasters and felt that truth was an overrated concept. It has been a terribly successful book nevertheless, more popular than the Celestial Home Care Omnibus, better selling than '53 More Things To Do In Zero Gravity', and more controversial than Oolon Colluphid's trilogy of philosophical blockbusters 'Where God Went Wrong', 'Some More of God's Greatest Mistakes' and 'Who is This God Person Anyway?'. ~~Inx~~ many of the more relaxed civilisations on the outer Eastern Rim of the Galaxy the Hitch Hiker's Guide has already supplanted the Great Encyclopaedia Galactica as the standard repository of all knowledge and wisdom, because although it has many omissions, contains much that is apocryphal, or at least wildly inaccurate, it scores over the older, more pedestrian work in two important respects - first, it is slightly cheaper, and second it has the words 'DON'T PANIC' inscribed in large friendly letters on the cover.

The main characters are Arthur Dent, an innocent Earthman (played by Simon Jones) who is rescued from otherwise certain death when the Earth is unexpectedly demolished to make way for a new hyper-space by-pass. He is rescued by an old friend of his who turns out to be from a small planet somewhere in the vicinity of Betelgeuse and not from Guildford

The main characters are these: Arthur Dent, an innocent Earthman (played by Simon Jones) who is rescued from the planet Earth when it is unexpectedly demolished to make way for a new hyper-space by-pass. He is rescued by an old friend of his, Ford Prefect (Geoffrey McGovern) ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~. He has been living incognito on Earth for the last fifteen years, but is in fact from a small planet somewhere in the vicinity of Betelgeuse. His name is explained by the fact that when he first arrived on Earth, the minimal research he had done suggested that Ford Prefect was a very common name and would be

The Guide went live on the radio without much fanfare, relying on listeners tuning in and telling their friends. Douglas, though, attempted some PR of his own, writing to film reviewer David Pirie (above and below), then working at London-based listings magazine *Time Out*. The letter gives an overview of the first series' characters and plot, plus a quick precis of Douglas's own credentials. The last line mentions that Douglas was about to do some writing for John Cleese's Video Arts company, but it seems never to have come to fruition.

nicely inconspicuous. They later meet up with Ford's semi cousin,
Zaphod Beeblebrox, ^(Mark Wing Davey) an ultra hip shyster who was once described by
Eccentrica Gallumbits, the Triple Breasted whore of Eroticon Six, as the
Best Bang since the Big One, and Trillian (Susan Sheridan), an unemployed
~~xxxxxphysicist~~ astrophysics graduate who was seduced by Zaphod at a party
in Islington.

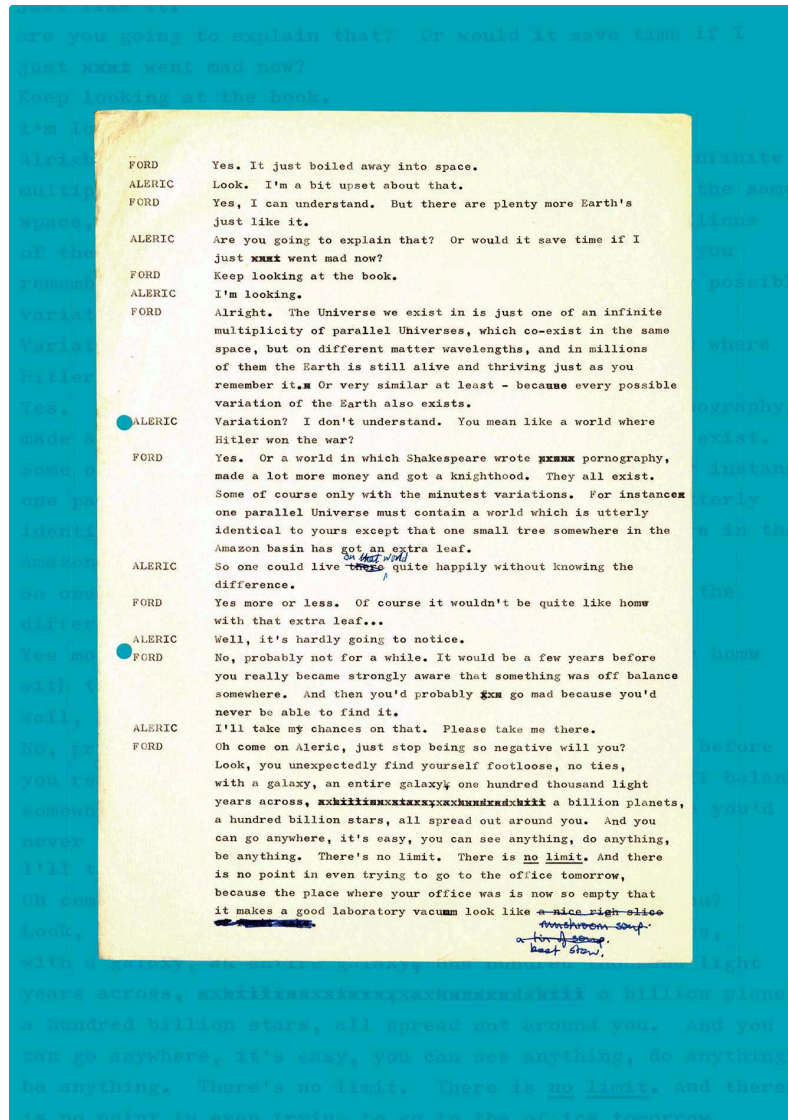
The star of the show is Peter Jones, who plays the narrator
and reads extracts from the Guide, and there are guest appearances from
Richard Vernon as ~~xxxxx~~ Slartibartfast, one of ~~xxxxxxx~~ the planet
builders of Magrathea, (He designs coastlines, and once won an award for
his work on Norway) Roy Hudd as the Master of Ceremonies at the Restaurant
at the End of the Universe, National Theatre star Stephen Moore as Marvin
the Paranoid Android, Jim Broadbent and Jonathan Adams as a couple of
philosophers whose jobs are threatened by the building of a giant super-
computer called Deep Thought, and Ray Hasset as an enlightened cop who
shoots everyone in sight for extremely humane reasons. --+

The show has some terrible revelations to make about the
origins and purpose of the human race, but is otherwise...well, a comedy
I suppose.

Everyone's going to say of course that we're jumping on
the Star Wars bandwagon, so I would just like to put in a small plea of
mitigation - I'd been hawking the idea of SF comedy for years and only
managed to sell it six months ago. It was Simon Brett who actually managed
to get the idea launched, but since he has now gone to LWTv, ~~the production~~
~~xxxxxxx~~ it is now being produced by Geoffrey Perkins. In fact it is
the most technically complicated ~~xxxxxxx~~ production ever attempted
by the Light Entertainment Department - one four minute section in Episode
Two took three days to record (but for God's sake don't publish that
because the Department isn't supposed to know, and it isn't a very good
section anyway).

I don't know if you're interested in any personal details
at all, but here are some minimally relevant ones anyway. I spent a year
or so working with Python Graham Chapman, mostly on projects which got
aborted somewhere along the line - but there's some interesting material
lying around gathering dust on shelves, and in a fringe capacity for
Python itself (for instance I wrote the original version of the Marilyn
Monroe sketch which appears in a hacked about state on the Holy Grail
album). After that I went into a bit of a decline and worked as a bodyguard
for an Arab royal family, edged my way back into writing by contributing
to the Burkiss Way (if you heard the second series you may remember the
Kamikaze sketch), and I'm currently working on the next Doctor Who series
and am about to do some writing for John Cleese's Video Arts film company.

DRAFTING THE RADIO SERIES



Hero of the tale, the hapless Earthman Arthur Dent was originally named Aleric B, which was amended after this sample of an early draft for episode one. In this version, *The Hitchhiker's Guide* researcher Ford Prefect explains to his bemused human friend the 'many worlds' theory of alternative realities. Douglas would return to this concept in later *Hitchhiker* novels.

1. ARTHUR: Do you do Take-Aways?

2. GARKBIT: ^{Pat} Aha, non m'sieur, here at Milliways we only serve the very finest in ultracuisine.

3. ZAPHOD: Ultracuisine? Don't give me head pains. ^{Look at this} ~~Last time I~~ ^{was here the food tasted like it was fresh from the Planet Pukron. Algolian Zylbatburger smothered in a hint of Vulcan Dodo rpit, I mean.}

4. GARKBIT: Saliva m'sieur ^{sal} saliva. The salivary gland of the Vulcan ultraDodo is a delicacy much sought after.

5. ZAPHOD: Not by me.

6. ARTHUR: What is an Algolian Zylbatburger anyway?

7. FORD: They're a kind of meatburger made from the most unpleasant parts of a creature well known for its total lack of any pleasant parts.

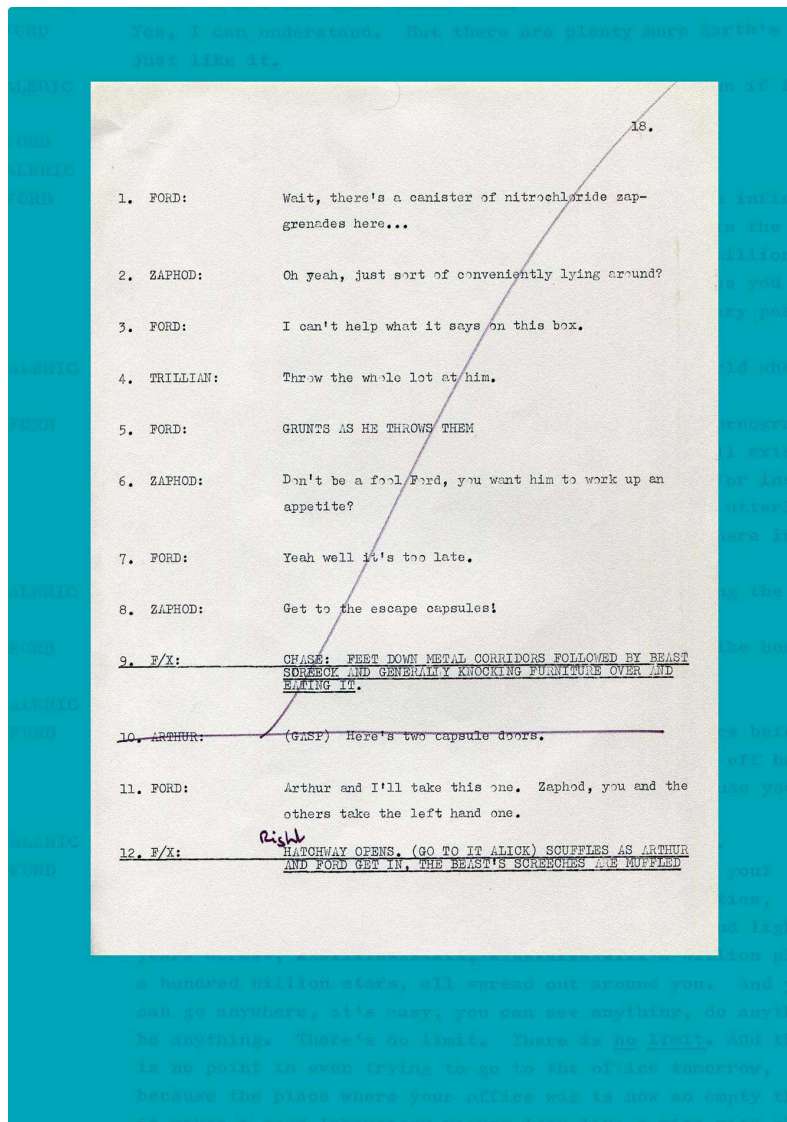
8. ARTHUR: So you mean that the Universe does actually end not with a bang but with a Wimp.

9. GARKBIT: ^{Sal} Believe me m'sieur, the Universe ends with a very big bang ^(cut in) indeed, and the food here is the ultimate gastronomic experience.

10. TRILLIAN: Yes, but is it good?

This is an annotated draft of a page from the fifth episode of the original *Hitchhiker* radio series in which Garkbit, the waiter, speaks with a French accent. The Zylbatburger is an example of the fine ultracuisine served at Milliways, the Restaurant at the End of the Universe.

As Zaphod once said: ‘Food, wine, a little personal abuse and the universe going foom!’ This deleted section of the radio series would have had the renegade President and ‘monkey-man’ Arthur exchanging insults again, aboard the Haggunenon craft in the sixth episode. (NB: ‘2.i.c.’ – Ford’s dialogue, numbered 6 – means the second-in-command.)



A few pages further along in this draft and our heroes are battling to escape the Haggunenon Commander, now morphed into the rampaging Bugblatter Beast of Traal. The stage direction 'Go to it Alick' is Douglas challenging BBC chief sound engineer Alick Hale-Munro to do his very best with the sound effects as described!

~~The Hitch-Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy is quite~~
~~emphatic on this point states quite clearly~~
~~that it is impossible to overemphasize the importance~~
~~of remaining on board any spacecraft that may happen~~
~~to give you a lift~~

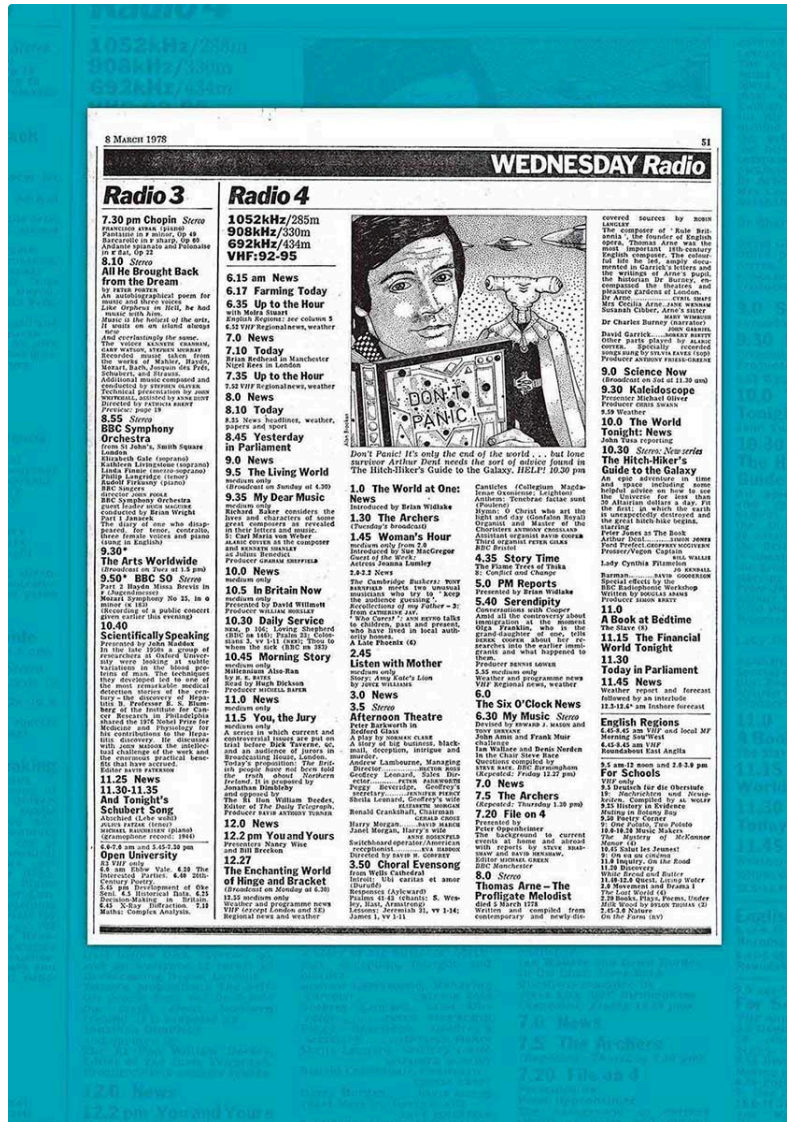
The Hitch-Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy is
frequently contains many passages that which
seemed to its compilers like a good
idea at the time. One of these supposedly
concerns relates the experiences of a Galactic Hitch-Hiker
called Veet Voojagig. A quiet young ~~from~~ man
from ~~Galga~~ Galga Fincham a ~~domitory~~ planet
~~of it on the outskirts of the Brant'svogan~~
~~Star system, otherwise known as the Greater~~
~~Imperial Sprawl - once a planet rich in ancient~~
~~legend~~ who pursued a brilliant career at
one of the ancient Universities studying ancient
comparative philology, transformational ethics, and the
wave/harmonic theory of historical perceptions and then
after a night of drinking Pan Galactic Gargle Blasters
became ^{increasingly} obsessed with the problem of what had
happened to all the ~~bi~~ ^{biros} he'd bought over the
last seven years.

Entire sections of later episodes of *The Hitchhiker's Guide* were written longhand in some of Douglas's notebooks. This half a page is about the mysterious knack that ball-point pens seem to have for disappearing, which amusingly appears to have happened to Douglas himself halfway through, as the notes switch from blue to green!

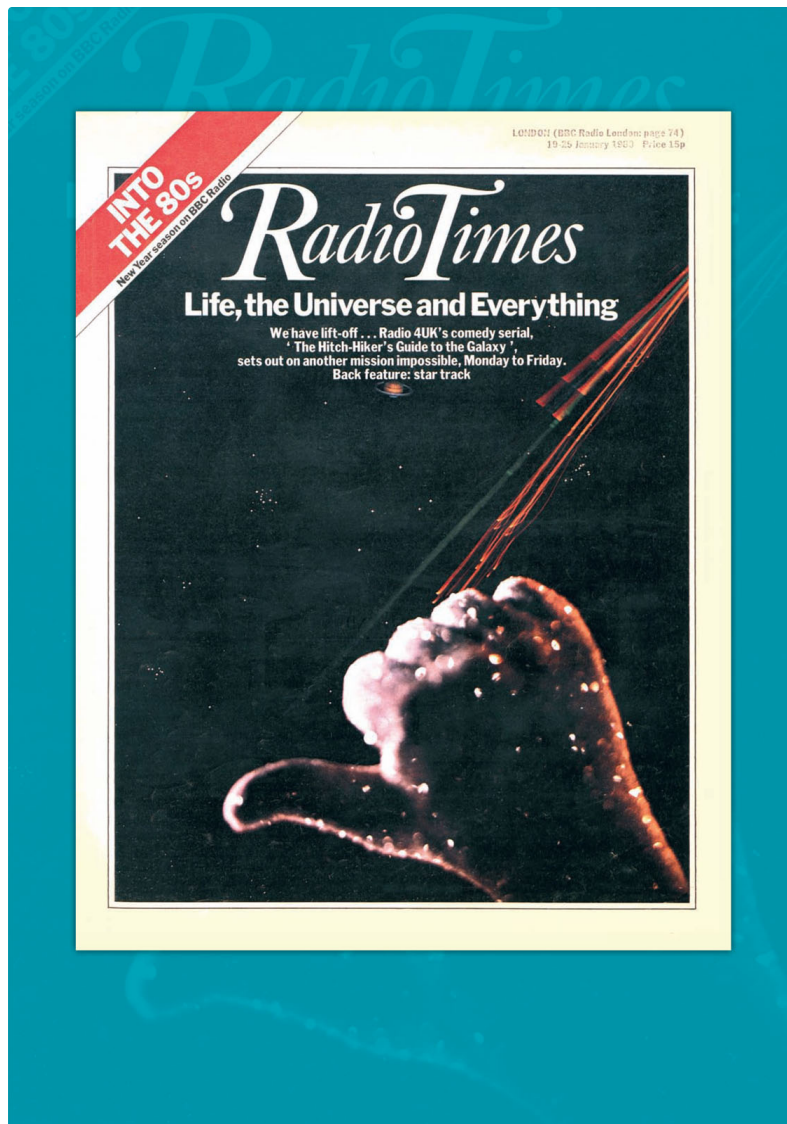
The Hitch-Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy contains many passages which seemed to its compilers like a good idea at the time. One of these supposedly relates to the experiences of a Galactic Hitch-Hiker called Veet Voojagig. A quiet young man from Galga Fincham who pursued a brilliant career at one of the ancient Universities studying ancient comparative philology, transformational ethics, and the wave/harmonic theory of historical perception and then after a night of drinking Pan Galactic Gargle Blasters became increasingly obsessed with the problem of what had happened to all the biros he'd bought over the last seven years.



MAKING THE RADIO TIMES

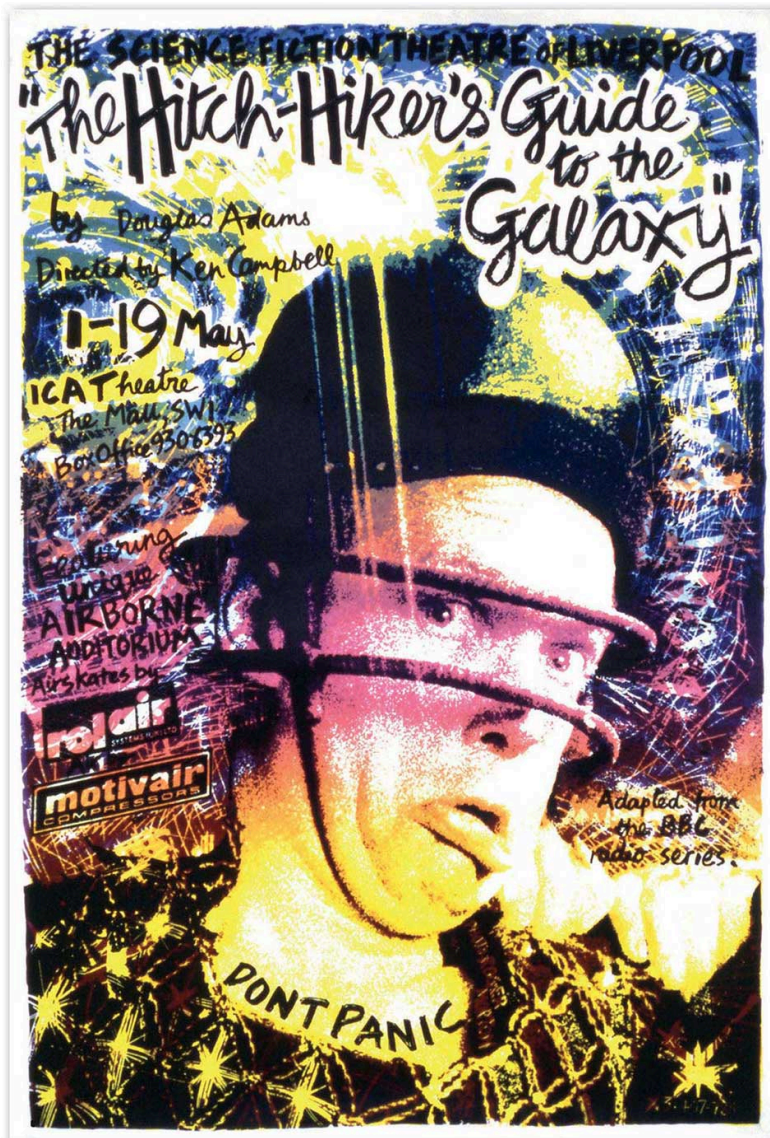


The listings magazine the *Radio Times* is almost as old as the BBC itself and a front cover is considered by programme makers as something of a coup. The first episode of *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* was highlighted in the listings in 1978 (above), then the series actually made the cover of the magazine in January 1980 – a testament to its success over the previous two years.



Success came at a cost, though, to radio producer Geoffrey Perkins and Douglas, as the honour was guaranteed only if the much-anticipated second series was broadcast on consecutive nights across the same week. This effectively shortened the production time for the later episodes, so much so that Douglas was often still writing the last scenes in one room while the show was being recorded by the cast in another.

STAGE SHOWS



Douglas went along to see his radio work adapted for the theatre in the first three professional productions. Maverick director Ken Campbell filled the space at the ICA in May 1979 with sets positioned all around the walls, and his audience placed on a revolving hovercraft platform, for a ride through the galaxy amid sound and flashing lights. This punk-style poster (above) was a sign of the times, as were the cheap and cheerful settings made of black plastic bags and tin foil.

Two actors sharing a single costume solved the conundrum of how to portray Zaphod's two heads; like a sort of pantomime horse, often tripping up the ramp

into the Heart of Gold. Inventive and funny, necessarily abridged from the six radio scripts, the show was a hit.

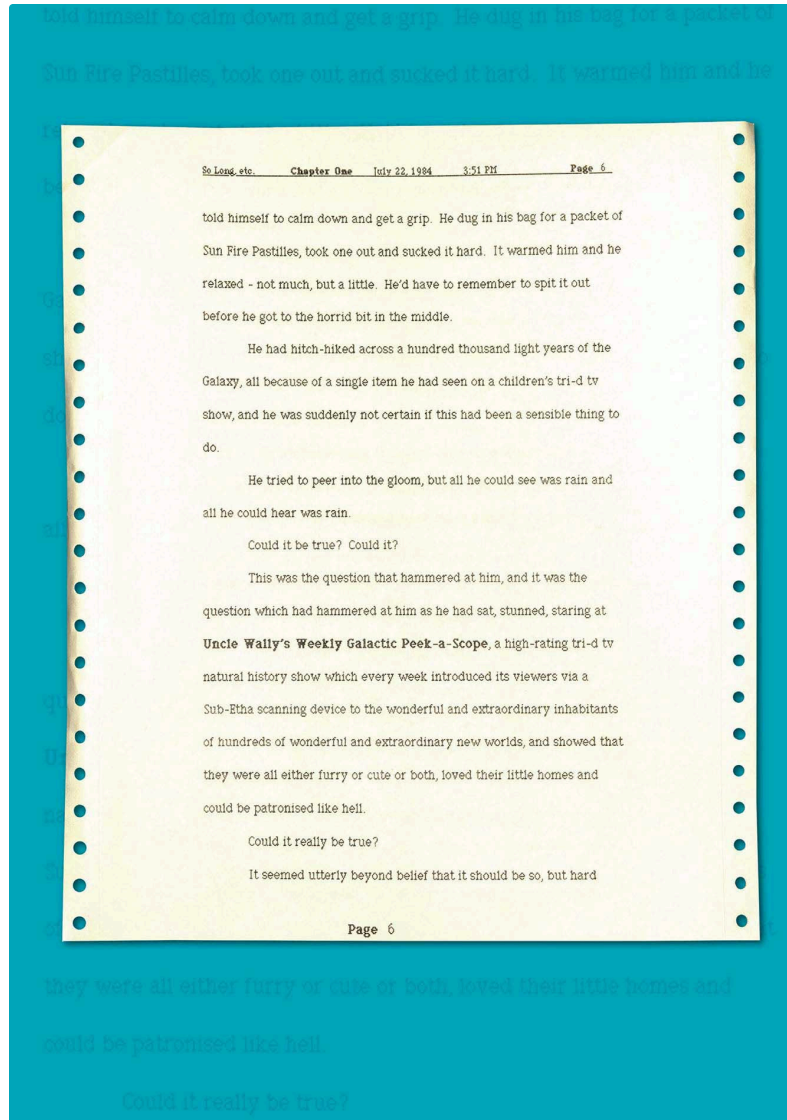


The second, perhaps more faithful stage adaptation was directed by Jonathan Petherbridge at Theatr Clwyd in Mold, Wales, in February 1980 (above, top left). He spread the full six episodes across three nightly performances, as well as a single long show at weekends. Petherbridge solved the twin heads problem with the use of a ventriloquist-style dummy worn and operated by Graeme Malcolm as Zaphod Beeblebrox (above, top right). The show was revived for a successful nationwide tour entitled 'The Special Edition' in late 1981, re-cast with puppeteer Ken Ellis as Zaphod.

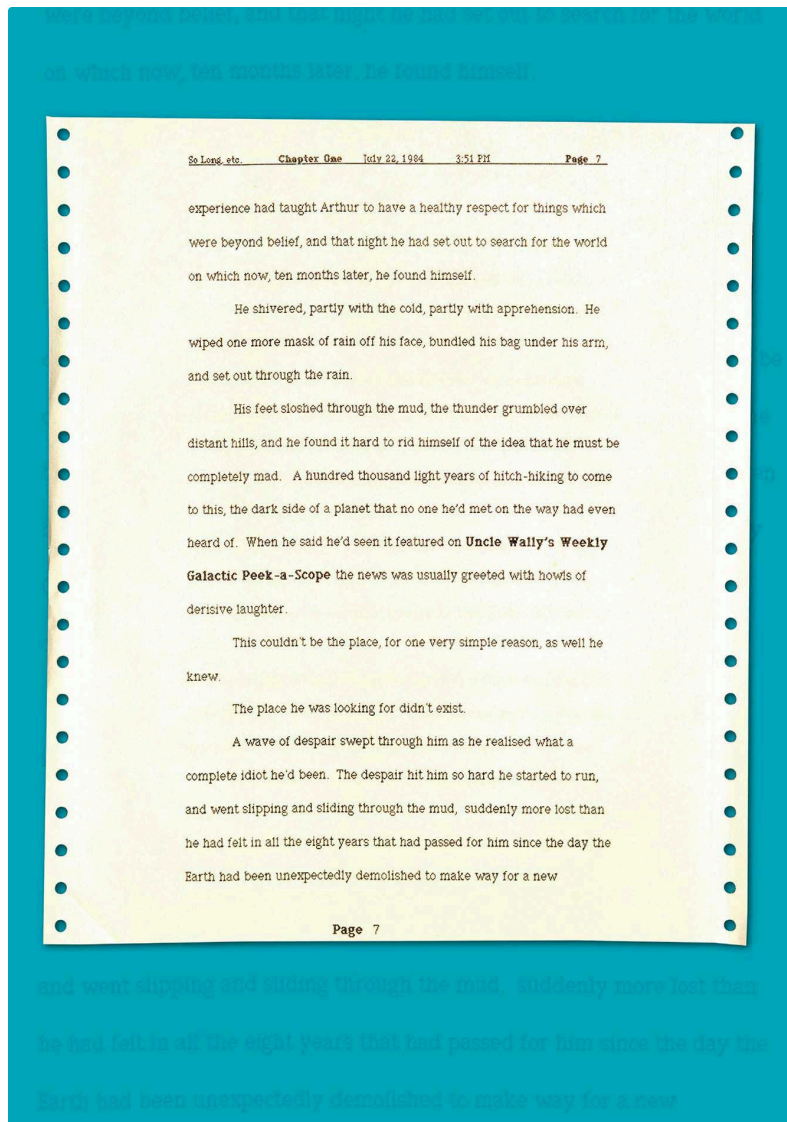
The third theatre production (above, bottom left) was mounted on a truly epic scale by director Ken Campbell again. This time he upped the ante – a 3,000-seat auditorium, a live rock band, a laser light show, two actors in one costume as Zaphod (again), plus a giant, inflatable whale (which was supposed to be dropped from the balcony onto the people in the stalls, but it proved dangerously heavy). The first night was packed and ran three very long hours. The poor word-of-mouth

from the critics saw the planned eight-week run last barely four. The Rainbow show saw the late addition of a new scene written by Douglas about an Amiglion-Major Cow, a large alien dairy animal bred to express itself clearly and to state that it actually wanted to get eaten. The 'Dish of the Day' mask had to be sculpted late at night (above, bottom right) two days before opening night, with the only clay available – not enough for a cow, but just enough for a pig!

AND SO TO THE NOVELS



After hearing the radio show, editor Nick Webb at Pan Books commissioned Douglas, together with John Lloyd, to adapt the radio scripts into a novel. However, Douglas decided to go it alone, which John in later times admitted was the right thing for Douglas to have done. Pan released the first paperback in October 1979 alongside the first of two vinyl LP records. The book took off like a rocket, leading to a call for sequels. In the end, Douglas wrote five *Hitchhiker's Guide* novels, the last in 1992.



Most extraneous snippets of his writing that didn't make the final cut have by now been well-documented, either as appendices in previous books about Douglas or incorporated into the final BBC radio adaptation. Above and opposite is one forgotten deletion from July 1984, intended for the fourth novel *So Long and Thanks for All the Fish*, which intriguingly mentions 'Uncle Wally's Weekly Galactic Peek-a-Scope'. It's a dot-matrix print-out from one of Douglas's early computers.

NOTES TO SELF (AND SONNY)

So, where are we then? At the beginning of another brand new day and no further forward. Terrific

In this episode what is actually going to ~~happen~~ happen?

We identify Magrathea – find out something about it – hear the recorded ~~announcement~~ announcement – missiles launched. Turned into bowl of petunias and a very surprised looking whale – the whale's monologue.

Landing. Let the Gerbils out.

I think Arthur probably encounters the Maviviv on his own for the planned exchange.

The Gerbils have an enormous bank account, I suppose. Lucky bastards.

The matter of the Question.

I suppose we ought to mention the fact that Zaphod is going to be bootlegging Beatles, but it doesn't seem to be relevant at the moment. It's a jinking red hemip.
Never mind.

Do they get the Girl from Praxxamouth?
Well I don't bloody know do I? Let's wait till we get to that bit.

0801

9

081

006

LLL

120

06

05h

So, where are we then? At the beginning of another brand new day and no further forward. Terrific.

In this episode what is actually going to happen?

We identify Magrathea – find out something about it – hear the recorded announcement – missiles launched. Turned into a bowl of petunias and a very surprised looking whale – the whale monologue.

Landing. Let the Gerbils out.

I think Arthur probably encounters Maviviv on his own for the planned exchange.

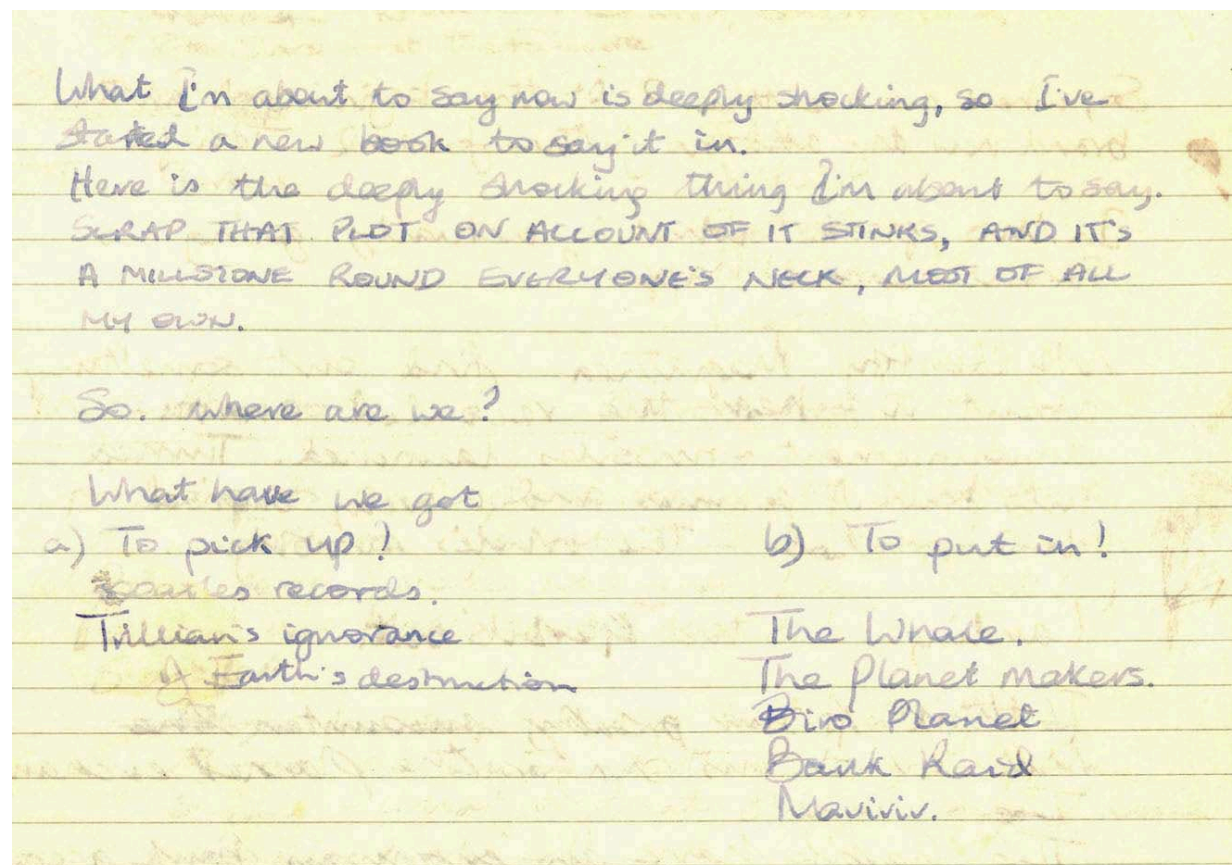
The gerbils have an enormous bank account I suppose. Lucky bastards.

The matter of the Question.

I suppose we ought to mention the fact that Zaphod is going to be bootlegging Beatles, but it doesn't seem to be relevant at the

moment. It's a fucking red herring. Never mind.

Do they get the Girl from Rickmansworth? Well I don't bloody know do I? Let's wait till we get to that bit.



Sifting through Douglas's many papers quickly reveals two things. First, that he seems to begin each notebook optimistically, but that this optimism lasts only a few pages – many of the remaining pages in each notebook are blank. Second, Douglas carried out conversations with himself. He chides his own inadequacies when stuck for ideas and berates himself for having forgotten something of which he only recently thought. In the top extract, it's worth noting that Trillian's gerbils later became mice, and that Maviviv was renamed Slartibartfast. In the lower, in an early draft Zaphod had stolen all the vinyl records from the party on Earth where he met Trillian and planned to exploit the music out in the rest of the galaxy.

What I'm about to say now is deeply shocking, so I've started a new book to say it in.

Here is the deeply shocking thing I'm about to say. SCRAP THAT PLOT ON ACCOUNT IT STINKS, AND IT'S A MILLSTONE ROUND EVERYONE'S NECK, MOST OF ALL MY OWN.

So, where are we?

What have we got

- a) To pick up! Beatles records. Trillian's ignorance of Earth's destruction.
- b) To put in! The whale. The planet makers. Biro planet. Bank raid. Maviviv.

Printing was important.

Backbinding was simply some
support technology that we
had to get ~~the~~ right.

Dickens never had to crawl around
under his desk matching cables.
We know he never had to crawl
around under his desk matching cables
~~from the door from the~~

Martin as a Samantian
on a planet which
is gradually committing
suicide

SONNY

Have gone for a walk
to try and clear up
the last problem in my
mind. Here's some
stuff for you to look through

B.

Sometimes the notes are little more than a notion for a scene or a new storyline... 'Dickens never had to crawl around under his desk matching cables.' This line, presumably inspired by Douglas's frustrations with computer tech, dongles and adaptors, made it into one of his later pieces of writing. Famously, after Douglas's procrastination had broken one deadline too many, the Pan Books editorial director, Sonny Mehta, decided to lock himself away with Douglas for days. He chose The Berkeley, an expensive London hotel, to force the completion of the fourth book. Douglas was occasionally allowed out – to go for a swim in the hotel pool, or to exercise in nearby Hyde Park – while the executive read the latest pages, presumably wrought directly from the typewriter. Right is a note Douglas left for Sonny on one of those occasions.

GENERAL NOTE TO MYSELF.

Writing isn't so bad really when you get through the worry. Forget about the worry, just press on. Don't be embarrassed about the bad bits. Don't strain at them. Give yourself time, you can come back and do it again in the light of what you discover about the story later on. It's better to have pages and pages of material to work with and ~~of~~ and maybe find an unexpected shape in that you can then craft and put to good use, rather than one manically reworked paragraph or sentence.

But writing can be good. You attack it, don't let it attack you. You can get pleasure out of it. You can certainly do very well for yourself with it...!

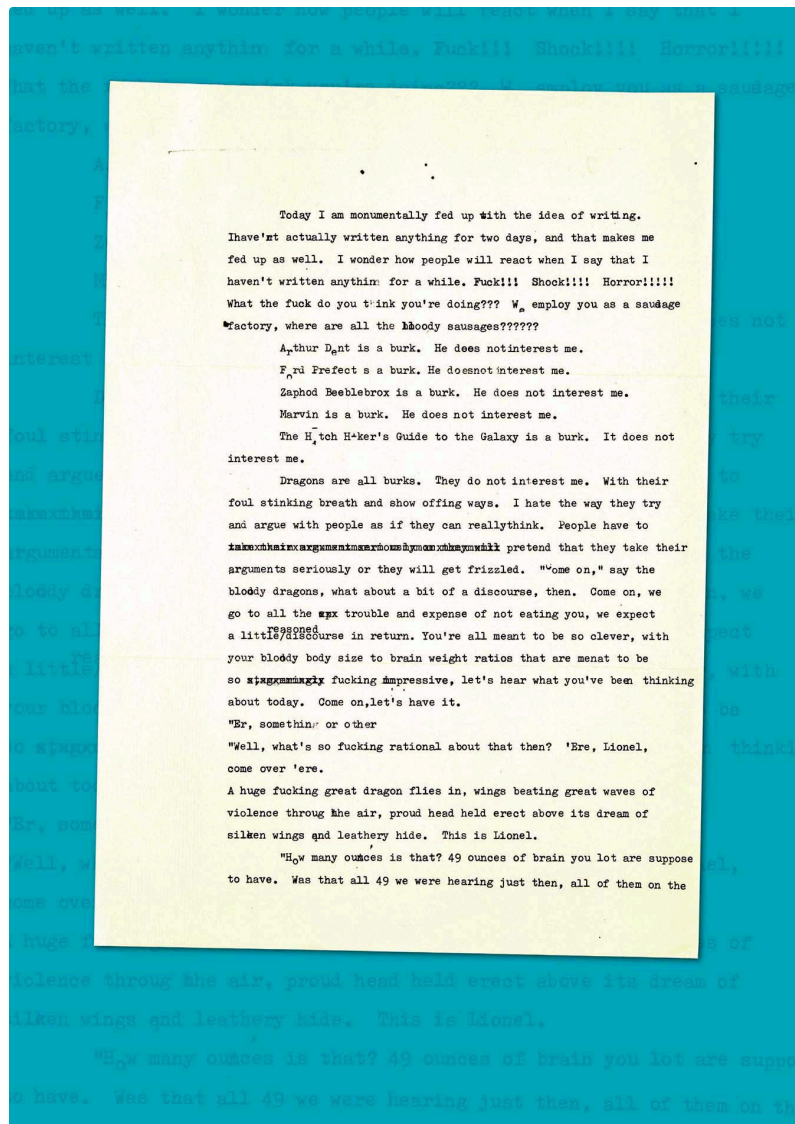
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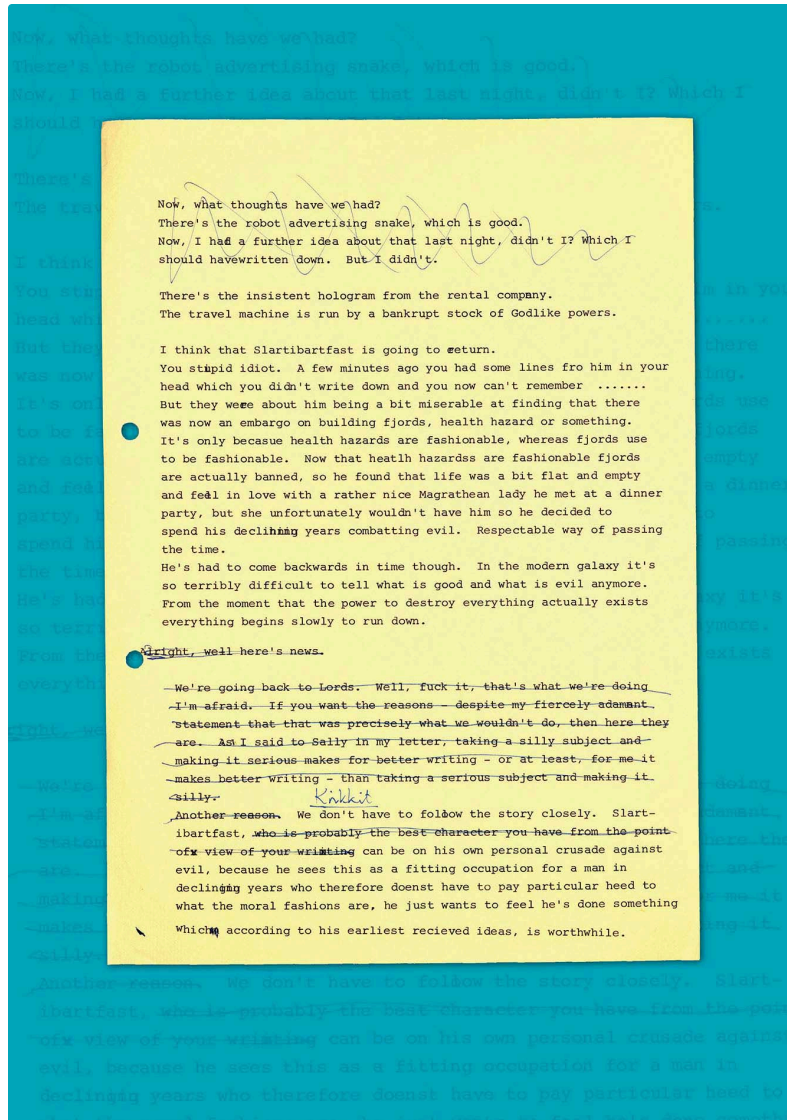
But writing can be good. You attack it, don't let it attack you. You can get pleasure out of it. You can certainly do very well for yourself with it...!





Sometimes Douglas would give himself little pep talks on the pages of his notebook (opposite). But on other occasions he was clearly having a tough time... Sometimes it's just a stream of consciousness down the page, with the odd line of sudden clarity, as if talking to himself.

THE LATER NOVELS



The notes on these pages correspond to a time when Douglas was writing the third novel, *Life, the Universe and Everything*.

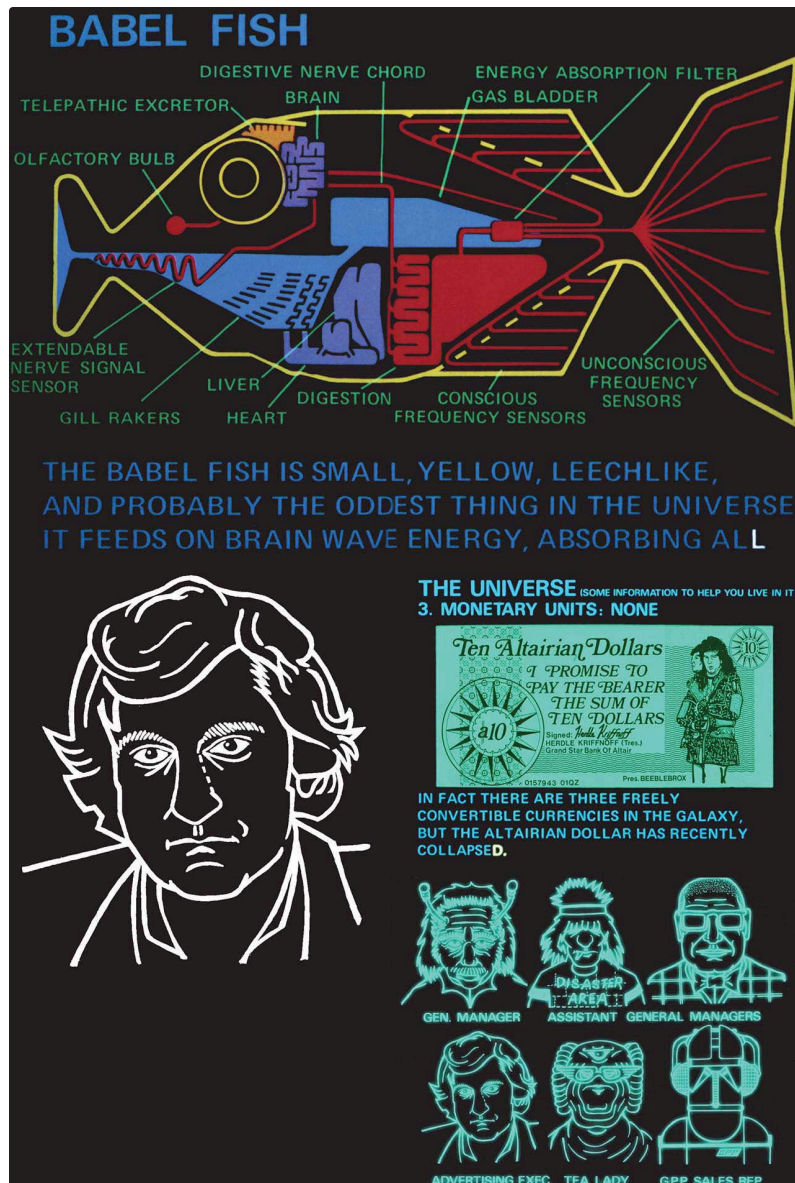
What is it with this scene?
To be absent-minded
To be absent-bodied.
To be a scientist. To say just exactly what you see, even if you can't believe you're seeing it. Even if people say it isn't there, or that you are mad to say it.
Don't think so hard about how something works that you can't see what it is. If you're wrong about how it works you may then not see the thing clearly, and if the thing is there clearly to be seen you are doing yourself a considerable disservice.
Don't be afraid to be a fool.
I made myself the biggest fool I could so that I could simply say what I saw. If you think you have a reputation to maintain then you cannot help but measure anything you think of say or reporting against the effect it will have on that. If you are a complete fool you can tell the truth. Trouble is of course, that no one listens. Still who's the fool.
The world is too marginal a place to be constrained by our notions of ~~xxxxxx~~ by the limits of our conceptions of it.
Go to the sea, feel the rain, swim with the dolphins, eat ~~xxxx~~ the fish.
Eating the fish is a symbol, like Arthur eating the fish in Santa Barbara and the Ocean Deep Diner in Placificus. A symbol of sensual pleasure, by the way Douglas, it may interest you to know that you are writing garbage.
To be a proper scientist is to be like a child. To see something, to say it. But when you are no longer a child...
First impressions are the right ones, because they are perfectly balanced. Thereafter your judgment becomes corrupted by knowledge which is always limited, always unbalanced.
This is all very well but it's not very funny. It's turngid and pontifical.

These notes appear among the draft of pages for the fourth novel, *So Long and Thanks for All the Fish*.

HITCHHIKER'S GUIDE ON TV



Douglas took a great deal of interest in the TV adaptation of his work, but as the production went along, he grew increasingly less enamoured with the producer/director Alan J.W. Bell. The two men often didn't see eye to eye on how to achieve the complex ideas in Douglas's detailed and imaginative script. Bell was old-school BBC, more concerned with the practicalities than the writer. He would sometimes (perhaps deliberately) forget to include Douglas in meetings or editing sessions, fearing the writer's arguments about production decisions would cause delays. However, Douglas did attend most of the location shoots and all six studio days. He got along famously with the young cast, whom he found more tuned to his own wavelength, generously taking them out for expensive meals, frequently without their director!



In 1981, Douglas explained that using animated graphics was a solution to the fact that on TV you don't need a narrator (as he'd used in the radio series). He claimed that the graphics were, in fact, 'one of the greatest highlights of the show'. These graphics are originals from the BBC TV series animations by Rod Lord and his team at Pearce Studios. Images of Douglas appear as in-jokes among the animations (bottom left and right).

3

~~(NO ONE CALLS ATTENTION TO IT) A GOAT
WITH A SCALE MODEL OF THE EIFFEL TOWER
STRAPPED TO ITS HEAD STANDING ABOUT.
THIS GOAT IS NEVER ~~BE~~ REFERRED TO, ~~BUT~~
IT WILL CONTINUE TO BE WITH THEM FOR
MOST OF THE REST OF THE SERIES.~~

ZAPHOD (DAZED): What the photon happened'

ARTHUR: Well, I was just saying, there's
this switch here you see, and...

ZAPHOD: Where are we Trillian?

TRILLIAN: Exactly where we were I think.

ZAPHOD: Then what happend the missiles?

FORD: (LOOKING AT THE LARGE SCREEN,
WHICH IS SHOWING A CONTINUALLY REPEATED
ACTION REPLAY OF THE TWO MISSILIES
TURNING INTO A SPERM WHALE AND A BOWL
OF PETUNIAS.) Well according to this
screen, they have just turned into a
bowl of petunias and a very surprised
looking whale.

EDDIE: At an Improbability Level of
eight million, seven hundred and sixty
seven thousand, one hundred and twenty
eight to one against.

THE HITCH HIKER'S GUIDE ~~2~~ TO THE GALAXY.
(TV)

SERIES TWO

EPISODE ONE.

by DOUGLAS ADAMS,

who wrote it.
(eventually)

THE BEGINNING OF THE SECOND SERIES
MIRRORS THE BEGINNING OF THE FIRST.
WE START WITH A SUNRISE.

THE SUNRISES OVER A HILL.

SINCE THIS IS PREHISTORIC EARTH, HOWEVER,
THE SHOT WILL DIFFER FROM THE FIRST ONE
IN THAT THERE WILL OF COURSE BE NO
TELEGRAPH POLES AND FENCES. IN FACT
THE LANDSCAPE WILL BE BEAUTIFUL, ALMOST
UNREALLY BEAUTIFUL AND IDYLIC.

IDYLIC FLOATY MUSIC ACCOMPANIES THE SUNRISE.

NARRATOR: Reason notwithstanding, the ~~Mx~~
Universe continues unabated.

THE IDYLIC DREAMY MUSIC CONTINUES BUT IS
PUNCTUATED AT THIS POINT BY A SUDDEN DRAMATIC
CHORD. A HITCHING THUMB LOGO APPEARS ON THE
~~SUN~~ SUN, IN ~~OUTLINE~~.

NARRATOR: On millions of planets throughout
the galaxy, new days continue to dawn, despite
the terrible failure rate.

Above left is a deleted paragraph from the TV series script in episode 3. '(NO ONE CALLS ATTENTION TO IT) A GOAT WITH A SCALE MODEL OF THE EIFFEL TOWER STRAPPED TO ITS HEAD STANDING ABOUT. THIS GOAT IS NEVER REFERRED TO, BUT IT WILL CONTINUE TO BE WITH THEM FOR MOST OF THE REST OF THE SERIES.' Unsurprisingly, this weird idea, a result of our heroes' use of the Improbability Drive, was deemed a step too far by the more practical producer, Alan J.W. Bell – and so he simply scribbled it out!

Above right is one of a few written pages, in Douglas's archive, for the start of the proposed second BBC TV series. But his dissatisfaction with Alan J.W. Bell and his desire for his friend, the radio series producer Geoffrey Perkins, to take over, was rejected by BBC bosses. Ultimately Douglas's reluctance to deliver a finished script for the second series led to its cancellation just two weeks before production was due

to commence. This, and the (unrelated) page below, are just a little hint of what might have been.

ARTHUR: Well, this has all been jolly interesting, Ford, but I think I might ~~now~~ just find a train and go home. ~~Now~~.

FORD: What?

ARTHUR: Well, here I am in my own world, ~~myxxxxxxxime~~ in my own time.

FORD: You're out of your head.

ARTHUR: I know you're going to tell me there's a whole galaxy out there but I've already seen it. It makes me tired and angry.

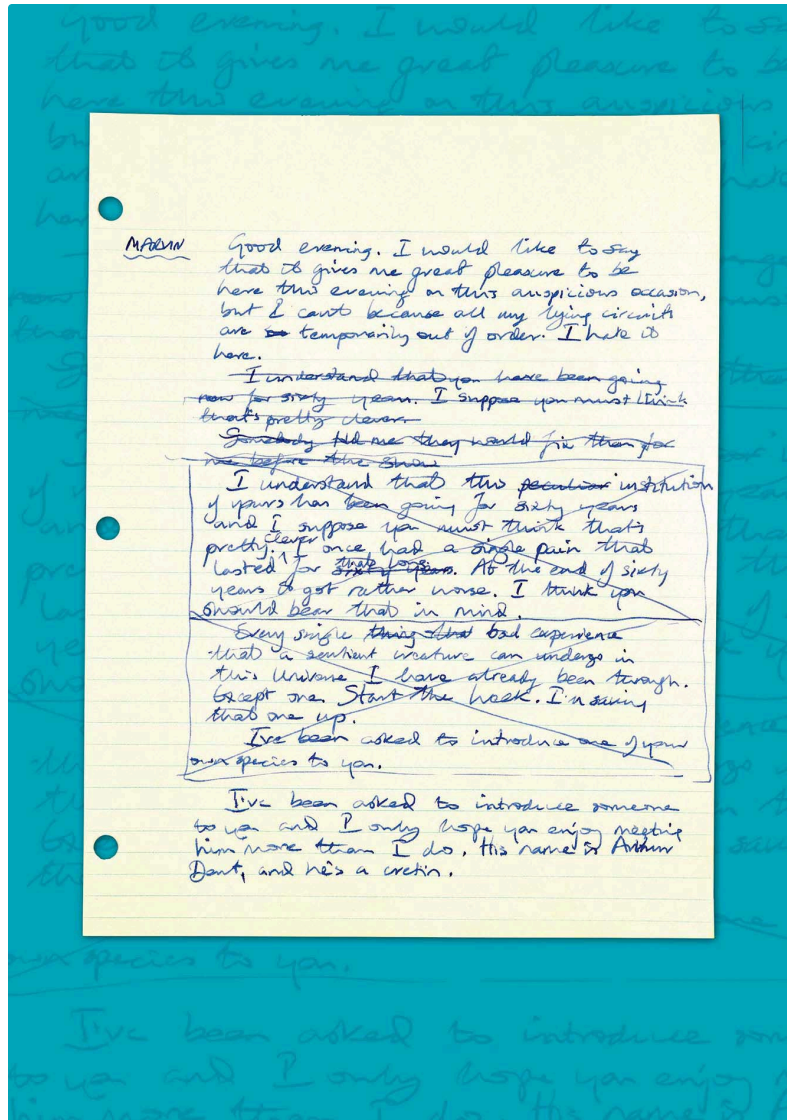
FORD: But we don't know the date.

ARTHUR: That's fine. I haven't got any appointments. I'm sorry. Travel may broaden the mind but it also gives me a deep craving for clean underwear...

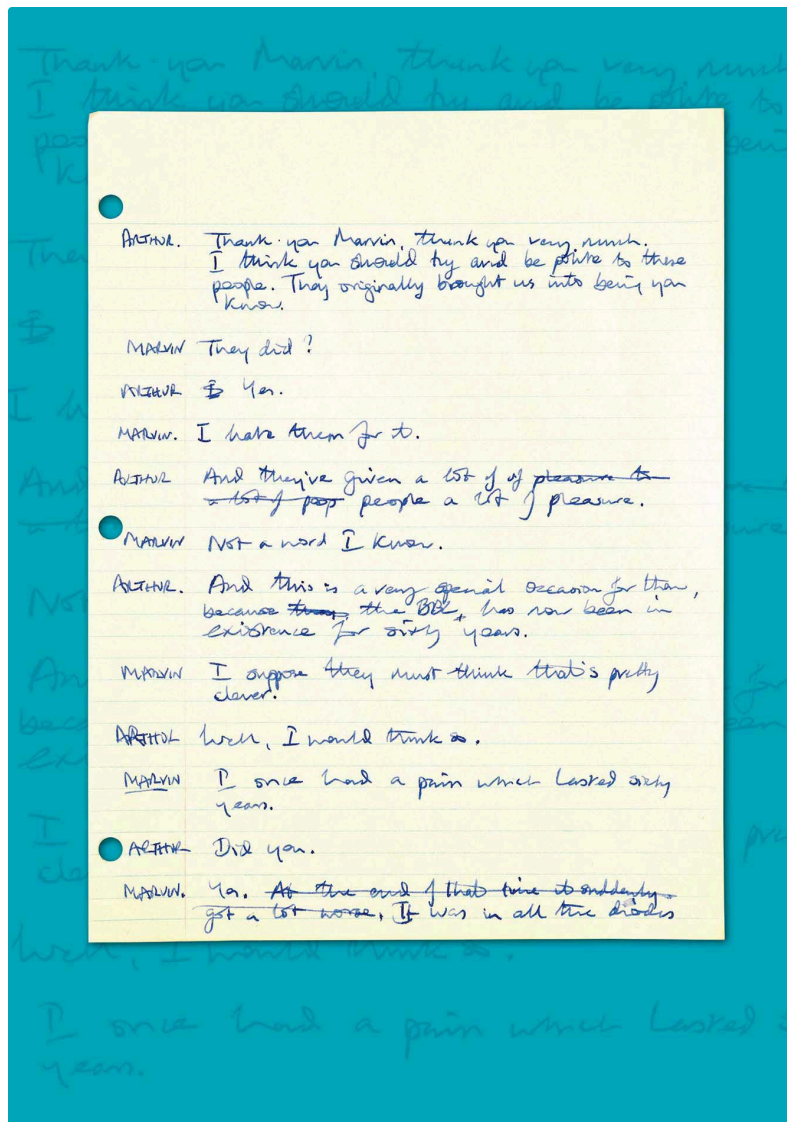
FORD:

At the start of the second TV series, Ford and Arthur would have escaped prehistoric Earth back to the present day where the story first began, as they did in the eventual third novel. But, finding himself with only 48 hours until the planet's destruction by the Vogons – and at Lord's Cricket Ground, of all places – was just too much for Arthur Dent.

MARVIN AND ARTHUR – A NEW BIT!



In the midst of writing *The Meaning of Liff* (see [pages 202–9](#)), around 1981–82, there's a brief note followed by some pages of a short script (a page from the sketch is reproduced above). It seems Douglas had been asked to draft something for two of his characters, as part of a TV programme about the 60th anniversary of BBC Radio. The note that goes with these pages says simply, 'Resources: Just Arthur + dressing gown' and 'Marvin with pre-recorded voice on tape.'



Presumably Simon Jones and Stephen Moore would have reprised their radio and TV roles as Arthur and the voice of Marvin. It seems the eventual show made for radio did not use this material, for whatever reason, but instead something else was drafted by unconnected writers, perhaps more suited to the tone of the production. Note that Douglas's script takes a sly dig at the long-running Monday-morning BBC Radio topical discussion show *Start the Week*.

down my left side. At the end of sixty years
it suddenly got a lot worse. ~~for the next~~
~~thirty million years. Then it really started~~
~~late that to hurt. These are the people who gave~~
~~it to me then over there?~~

ARTHUR. Yes.

MARLOW. Gloat whilst there is still time.

ARTHUR. Ladies and gentlemen, I must apologise
for the behaviour of this robot, but he's
been through a bad time ~~also~~ recently.

MARLOW. Recently! Listen. I have ~~been~~ under
every single bad experience it is possible
for a sentient being to undergo in this
universe I have already been through.
Except start the week. I'm saving that
up for a sunny day.

ARTHUR. Look, I think we'd better go.

MARLOW. Why stop now just when I'm hating it?

ARTHUR. Ladies + gentlemen, ~~I'd just like to say on~~
~~the BBZ's sixtieth birthday I wish I could~~
~~it was possible for me to say that I~~
~~look forward to the next sixty~~ hope
the next sixty years go as well, but
I'm afraid that's not going to be possible.
I have to go now. You've been a great
planet. All that I can say to you ~~now~~

Is, Don't Panic.

MARVIN: Good evening. I would like to say that it gives me great pleasure to be here this evening on this auspicious occasion, but I can't because all my lying circuits are temporarily out of order. I hate it here.

~~I understand that you have been going now for sixty years. I suppose you must think that's pretty clever. Somebody told me they would fix them for me before the show.~~

~~I understand that this peculiar institution of yours has been going for sixty years and I suppose you must think that's pretty clever. I once had a single pain that lasted for that long. At the end of sixty years it got rather worse. I think you should bear that in mind. Every single bad experience that a sentient creature can undergo in this universe I have already been through. Except one. Start The Week. I'm saving that one up.~~

~~I've been asked to introduce one of your own species to you.~~

I've been asked to introduce someone to you and I only hope you enjoy meeting him more than I do. His name is Arthur Dent, and he's a cretin.

ARTHUR: Thank you Marvin, thank you very much. I think you should try and be polite to these people. They originally brought us into being you know.

MARVIN: They did?

ARTHUR: Yes.

MARVIN: I hate them for it.

ARTHUR: And they've given a lot of ... people a lot of pleasure.

MARVIN: Not a word I know.

ARTHUR: And this is a very special occasion for them, because the BBC has now been in existence for sixty years.

MARVIN: I suppose they must think that's pretty clever.

ARTHUR: Well, I would think so.

MARVIN: I once had a pain which lasted sixty years.

ARTHUR: Did you.

MARVIN: Yes. ~~At the end of that time it suddenly got a lot worse.~~
It was in all the diodes down my left side. At the end of
sixty years it suddenly got a lot worse. ~~For the next~~
~~thirty~~ million years. Later it got worse again, and a
couple of million later than that, then it really started to
hurt. These are the people who gave it to me then are
they?

ARTHUR: Yes.

MARVIN: Gloat whilst there is still time.

ARTHUR: Ladies and gentlemen I must apologise for the
behaviour of this robot, but he's been through a bad
time recently.

**I've been asked to introduce someone to you and I
only hope you enjoy meeting him more than I do. His
name is Arthur Dent, and he's a cretin.**

MARVIN: Recently! Listen. ~~I have been under~~ Every single bad
experience it is possible for a sentient being to undergo
in this universe I have already been through. Except
Start the Week. I'm saving that up for a sunny day.

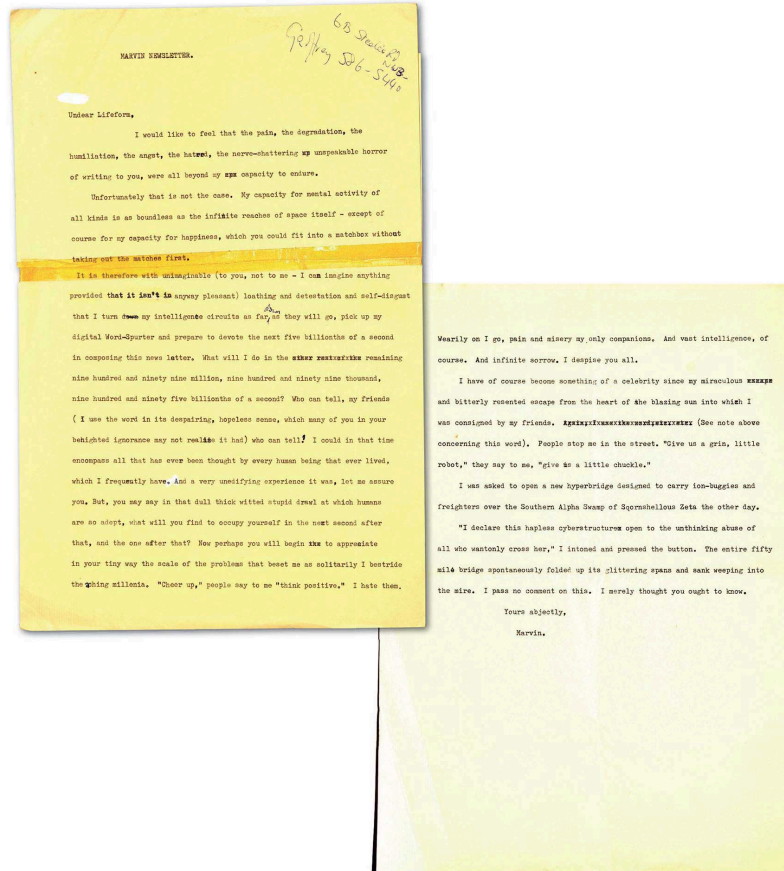
ARTHUR: Look, I think we'd better go.

MARVIN: Why stop now just when I'm hating it?

ARTHUR: Ladies & gentlemen, ~~I'd just like to say~~ on the BBC's
sixtieth birthday I wish it was possible for me to say I
could say that I ~~look forward to the next sixty~~ hope the
next sixty hope the sixty years go as well, but I'm afraid
that's not going to be possible. I have to go now.
You've been a great planet. All that I can say to you
now is, Don't Panic.



MARVIN'S LETTER



This is Douglas's draft of a letter from Marvin, on behalf of the Marvin Depreciation Society. It was eventually issued by the record company behind Marvin's brief couple of bids for chart success with his own pop records in 1981. The transcript on the opposite page is from the final printed version of the letter, now a rare collectible.

**THE MARVIN DEPRECIATION SOCIETY
THIS PRIMITIVE PIECE OF PAPER
SIGNIFIES TO THOSE THAT CARE
THAT SOMEONE OR OTHER SAY
Mr. X. Xxxxxx (Fan's name written in by hand)
HAS FOR REASONS WHICH DEFY
ANALYSIS BEEN MADE A MEMBER**

OF THE MARVIN DEPRECIATION SOCIETY

Undear lifeform,

I would like to feel that the pain, the degradation, the humiliation, the angst, the hatred, the nerve-shattering unspeakable horror of writing to you, were all beyond my capacity to endure. Unfortunately that is not the case. My capacity for mental activity of all kinds is as boundless as the infinite reaches of space itself – except of course for my capacity for happiness, which you could fit into a matchbox without taking out the matches first.

It is therefore with unimaginable (to you, not to me – I can imagine anything provided that it isn't in anyway pleasant) loathing and detestation and self-disgust that I turn my intelligence circuits as far down as they will go, pick up my digital Word-Spouter and prepare to devote the next five billionths of a second in composing this newsletter. What will I do in the remaining nine hundred and ninety nine million, nine hundred and ninety nine thousand, nine hundred and ninety five billionths of a second? Who can tell, my friends (I use the word in its despairing, hopeless sense, which many of you in your benighted ignorance may not realise it had) who can tell! I could, in that time encompass all that has ever been thought by every human being that ever lived, which I have frequently done. And a very unedifying experience it was, let me assure you. But, (you may say, in that dull thick-witted stupid drawl at which humans are so adept), what will you find to occupy yourself in the next second after this, and the one after that? Now perhaps you will begin to appreciate in your tiny way, the scale of the problems that beset me as solitarily I bestride the aching millennia. "Cheer up," people say to me "think positive." I hate them. Wearily on I go, pain and misery my only companions. And vast intelligence, of course. And infinite sorrow. I despise you all.

I have of course become something of a celebrity since my miraculous and bitterly resented escape from the heart of the blazing sun into which I was consigned by my friends. (See note above

concerning this word). People stop me in the street. “Give us a grin, little robot,” they say to me, “give us a little chuckle.”

I was asked to open a new hyperbridge designed to carry ion- buggies and freighters over the Southern Alpha Swap of Squornshellous Zeta, the other day.

“I declare this hapless cyberstructure open to the unthinking abuse of all who wantonly cross her,” I intoned, and pressed the button. The entire fifty mile bridge spontaneously folded up its glittering spans and sank weeping into the mire. I pass no comment on this. I merely thought you ought to know.

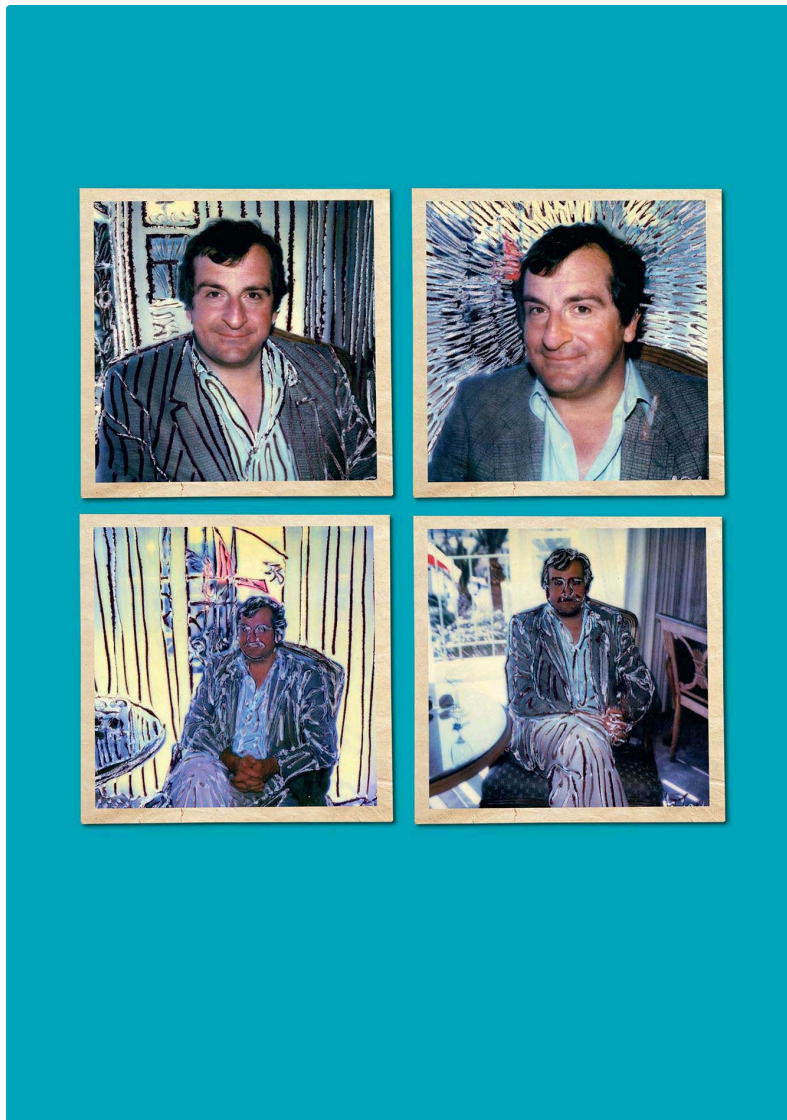
Yours abjectly,
Marvin.

THE MARVIN DEPRECIATION SOCIETY
2, WHITECHURCH LANE – LONDON E1

PROPRIETORS – SARM PRODUCTIONS LIMITED
VAT NUMBER 244 9859 16



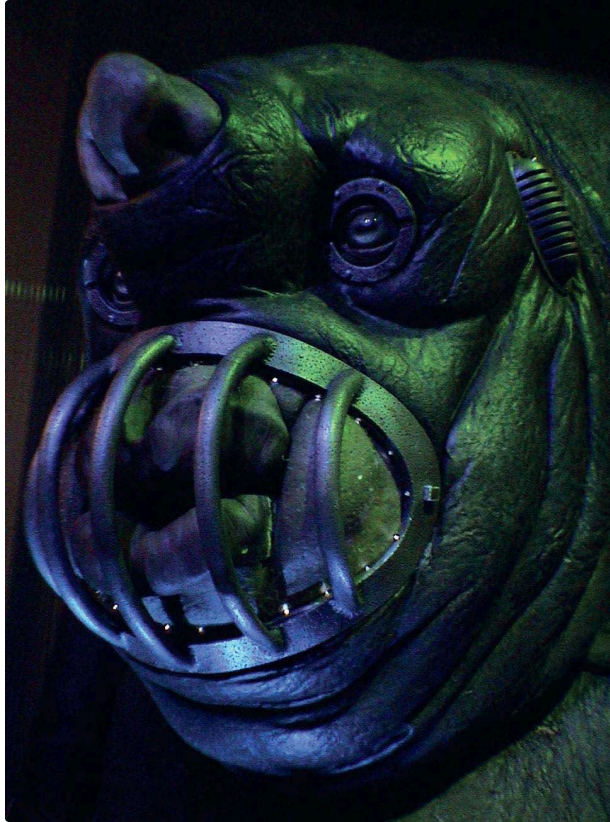
FURTHER ADAPTATIONS



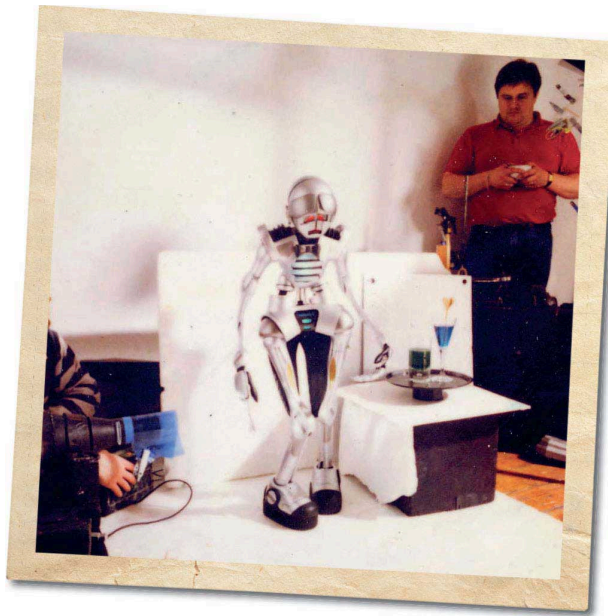
Douglas first went to Hollywood in 1983, when producer Ivan Reitman took out an option to make *The Hitchhiker's Guide* into a big-budget movie. This was, to begin with, an exciting time for Douglas, until he realized the producer didn't share his precise vision. *Hitchhiker* was not to become a Hollywood blockbuster during Douglas's lifetime. Nonetheless, Douglas visited the West Coast again many times in later years and eventually settled there. On one trip in 1987, he was interviewed by film critic Michael Dare, who was a fan of Douglas's work. Dare liked to photograph Polaroids of his subjects and then melt the pictures into little abstract works of art. A selection of his melted Polaroids of Douglas are reproduced here.



The Illustrated Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy (1994) was a large-format book with early digital manipulated images, art-directed by Kevin Jon Davies, pictured here with the book's cast.



A Vogon soldier from the eventual *Hitchhiker's Guide* movie (2005) was part of a display of props, costumes and scenery at the Science Museum, London.



In *The Illustrated Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, Marvin was realized as a puppet character by Jonathan Saville, who later also worked on the movie *Vogons*.

There were certain onions sitting unneeded, sour and furry in the bottom of a pickle jar in a dusty corner of the larder. They had been there for many years, gathering grime and offensiveness, unthought of. He only thought of them now because suddenly he knew how they felt.

A ray gun which causes the person at whom you point it to understand your point of view, see things from your angle.

A concept discovered at the bottom of a 1986 page of notes for the novel *Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency* concerned a Point-of-View gun (above). Once aimed at a victim, the weapon somehow allows the target to see things from the attacker's angle. In the movie, Marvin uses it on the Vogons to make them give up and surrender.

Dear Douglas

DIRK MAGGS

Dear Douglas

You will recall that we last met in Broadcasting House Reception in 1999. I was entering as you were heading for the exit, and we moved to sit in the waiting area to catch up about our current BBC Radio 4 projects (*The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Future* for you, a dramatisation of *Voyage* by Stephen Baxter for me).

Seven years earlier you heard my work and felt I was the person to produce three new series of *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* – based on your later novels – for BBC Radio. That effort crashed and burned through copyright issues, but we carried on hoping it might be revived until a year or so before this encounter, when your office informed me that the film rights had been sold and I should give up hope of any further radio series. Now, sitting on our squeaky leather BBC sofa, you said there was always a chance of bring Hitchhiker's 'home' to radio.

In 2001 you suddenly departed this Arc Of Probability and the film was temporarily languishing in development hell, while the audio rights became available. Thus, despite your absence, we finally managed to make the third, fourth and fifth series of *Hitchhiker's* for BBC Radio 4, and I even got you into the cast, playing a part – as you'd requested – thanks to the audiobook reading you'd made years before of *Life, the Universe and Everything*.

Shortly afterwards BBC Radio 4 commissioned three series from your Dirk Gently novels. The first two were faithful to your work, the third would be based on your notes for *The Salmon Of Doubt*.

That last series wasn't made when I parted with the production company, who I felt failed to behave responsibly towards creative talent. I learned later that your agent Ed Victor withdrew permission for them to make it without me. I'd still like to have completed the trilogy, but I hope you agree Ed made the right call.

A 'live' performance based on *Hitchhiker's* featuring the original cast took place in 2008 at The Royal Geographical Society and another in 2009 at the Royal Festival Hall. Three years later, two successive tours of *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy Radio Show Live* entertained more than 35,000 happy adults and children in theatres across the UK, introducing new devotees to your work. History repeated itself – after a fashion – when those running the tour let down the creative talent, abandoning us to our fate whilst still on the road.

It's been a mixed bag of experiences, many of which I remember with pride, some of which still have me waking up in a cold sweat. But the moment I will treasure most – and want to share with you – is what your mother said to me after she came to see the show at the Mayflower Theatre in Southampton: 'I often fell asleep when the radio series were broadcast as they were on rather late,' she said. 'I never imagined I'd be in an audience to see them performed live. Dirk, I had no idea Douglas's work was so *funny*.'

Thank you, Douglas.

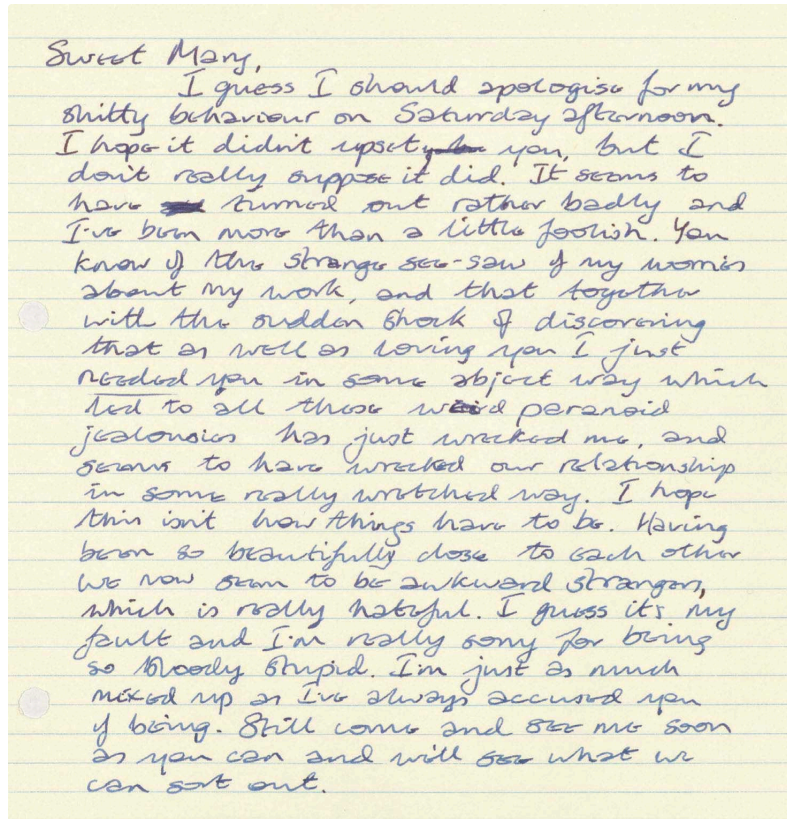
Yours ever

Dirk



Dirk Maggs is a freelance writer and director chosen by Douglas to continue *Hitchhiker* on BBC Radio. Maggs eventually adapted, co-produced and directed four series based on the later *Hitchhiker* books, plus a live radio broadcast and stage tours (shown above, with Simon Jones on the left as Arthur Dent, in a photo taken by Ken Humphrey). His work with Audible includes Neil Gaiman's *The Sandman* series.

On Love

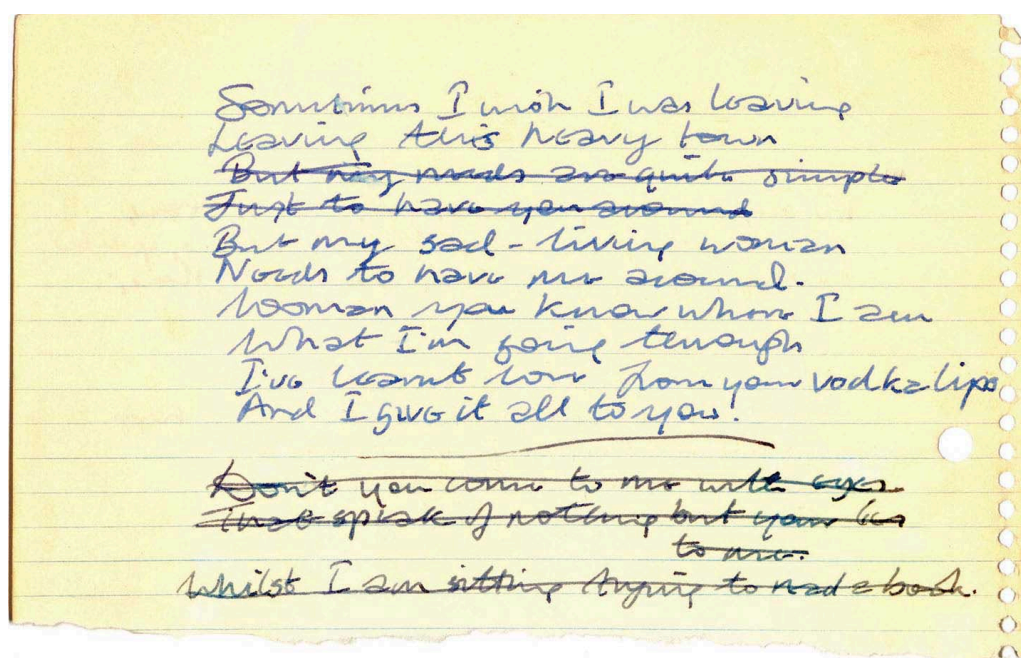


Sweet Mary,
I guess I should apologise for my shitty behaviour on Saturday afternoon. I hope it didn't upset ~~you~~ you, but I don't really suppose it did. It seems to have ~~been~~ turned out rather badly and I've been more than a little foolish. You know of the strange see-saw of my worries about my work, and that together with the sudden shock of discovering that as well as loving you I just needed you in some object way which led to all those weird paranoid jealousies has just wrecked me, and seems to have wrecked our relationship in some really wretched way. I hope this isn't how things have to be. Having been so beautifully close to each other we now seem to be awkward strangers, which is really hateful. I guess it's my fault and I'm really sorry for being so bloody stupid. I'm just as much mixed up as I've always accused you of being. Still come and see me soon as you can and we'll see what we can sort out.

Douglas has been criticized for his lack of believable women characters – in fact, he admitted it was something he struggled with. However, he was never short of female admirers and there's evidence of this among his papers of some relationships that really side-swiped him. At university, for example, he wrote about a liaison with an unhappily married woman called Mary. This is a draft of a letter apologizing to Mary for his behaviour – although we'll never know, of course, whether a final version of it ever reached her.

Sweet Mary,
I guess I should apologise for my shitty behaviour on Saturday afternoon. I hope it didn't upset you, but I don't really suppose it did. It seems to have turned out rather badly and I've been more than a little foolish. You know of the strange see-

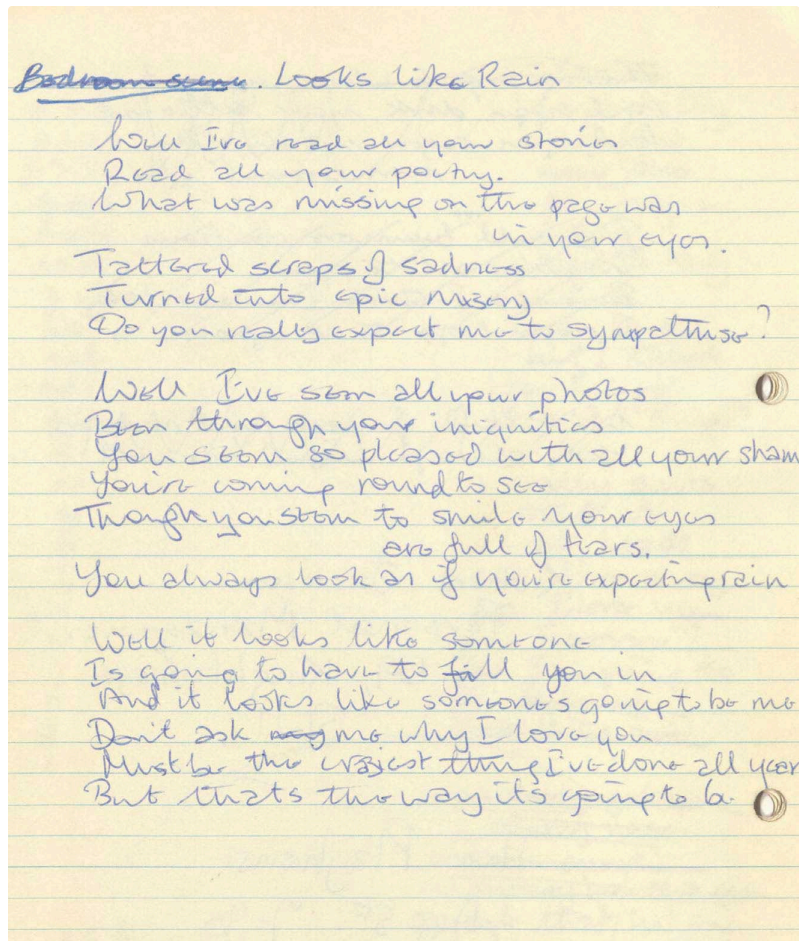
saw of my worries about my work, and that together with the sudden shock of discovering that as well as loving you I just needed you in some abject way which led to all those weird paranoid jealousies has just wrecked me, and seems to have wrecked our relationship in some really wretched way. I hope this isn't how things have to be. Having been so beautifully close to each other we now seem to be awkward strangers, which is really hateful. I guess it's my fault and I'm really sorry for being so bloody stupid. I'm just as much mixed up as I've always accused you of being. Still come and see me soon as you can and we'll see what we can sort out.



There are several examples of Douglas's love poetry in the archive, too – two of which are reproduced and transcribed below and date from his later years at university.

Sometimes I wish I was leaving
Leaving this heavy town
But my sad-living woman
Needs to have me around.

Woman you know where I am
What I'm going through
I've learnt love from your vodka lips And I give it all to you!



Looks like Rain

Well I've read all your stories Read all your poetry.
What was missing on the page was in your eyes.

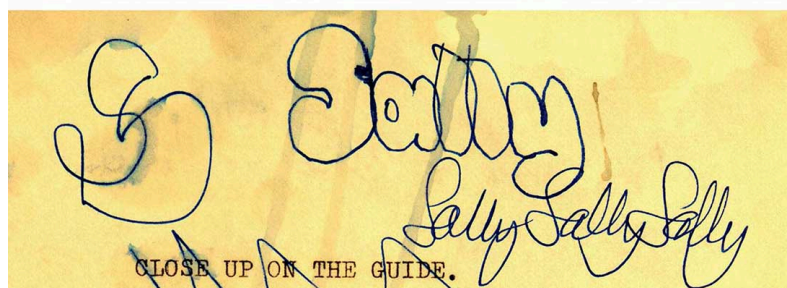
Tattered scraps of sadness Turned into epic misery
Do you really expect me to sympathise?

Well I've seen all your photos Been through your iniquities You seem
so pleased with all your shame You're coming round to see
Though you seem to smile your eyes are full of tears.
You always look as if you're expecting rain.

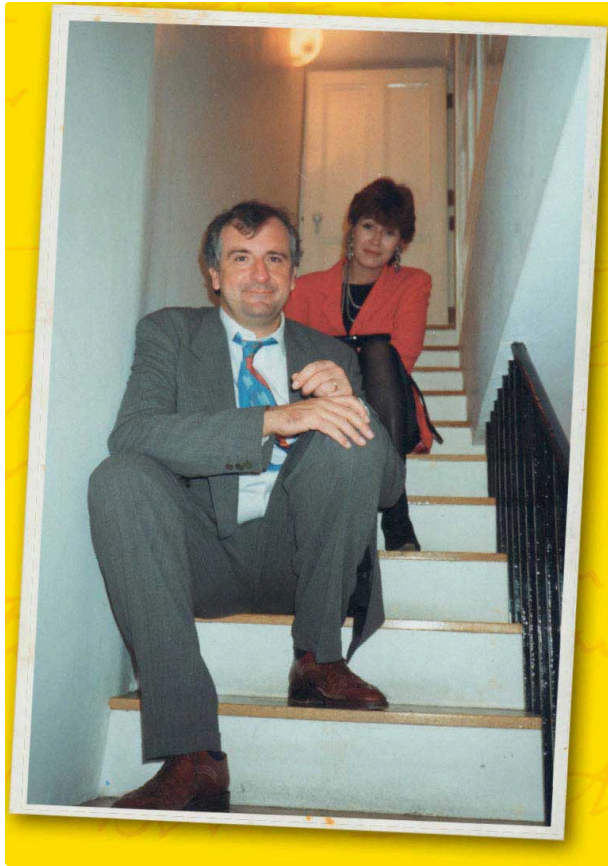
Well it looks like someone Is going to have to fill you in And it looks like someone's going to be me Don't ask me why I love you Must be the craziest thing I've done all year But that's the way it's going to be.

looking for houses and trying to ~~see~~
 assess them for how they accommodat
 would accommodate ~~you~~ my sweet lover
 and not knowing whether she would
 ever be there or whether I will live
 in it by myself, which, as you can
 probably imagine, ~~is~~ fucking heart breaking.

Some people (and here I'm thinking primarily
 of myself, though I think other people
 do it too) use records to try and dump
 unwanted emotion into. When a particular
 piece of music becomes associated with
 a particular piece of powerful emotion you
 play that record over and over and over
 again - you're torturing yourself with
 it in fact. Eventually, the hope is that



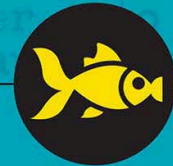
In 1980, after his first real flush of success, Douglas was invited to speak at the first Writers' Week held at the University of St Andrews, in Scotland. While there, he met guest speaker and novelist Sally Emerson. She lived with Douglas in his 'film-starry' new apartment in London's fashionable Islington – although, before they moved in, Douglas wondered whether he might end up living in it on his own (above, top) without her. Either way, the relationship was doomed and she left six months later. He dedicated the third *Hitchhiker's Guide* novel 'for Sally' and there is evidence that Arthur's love interest Fenchurch in the fourth novel was inspired by her, too. A page (above, bottom) of his draft notes for the abandoned second TV series of *Hitchhiker's* features a telling doodle that repeats her name.



The barrister Jane Belson (above, on the stairs with Douglas), who sadly died in 2011, was the love of Douglas's life. They were introduced by mutual friends in the early 1980s and Jane became his flatmate. They married in 1991 and had a daughter, Polly, in 1994.

id Morgan and Graham Simpson,

Thank you very much for your letter about the
ker's Guide to the Galaxy. You asked to know
Brockian Ultra cricket - here is a rough summary of the
more important ones, as far as I can remember. The
set of rules is so massively complex and the
time they were all bound together as a single
they underwent gravitational collapse (and for
le).

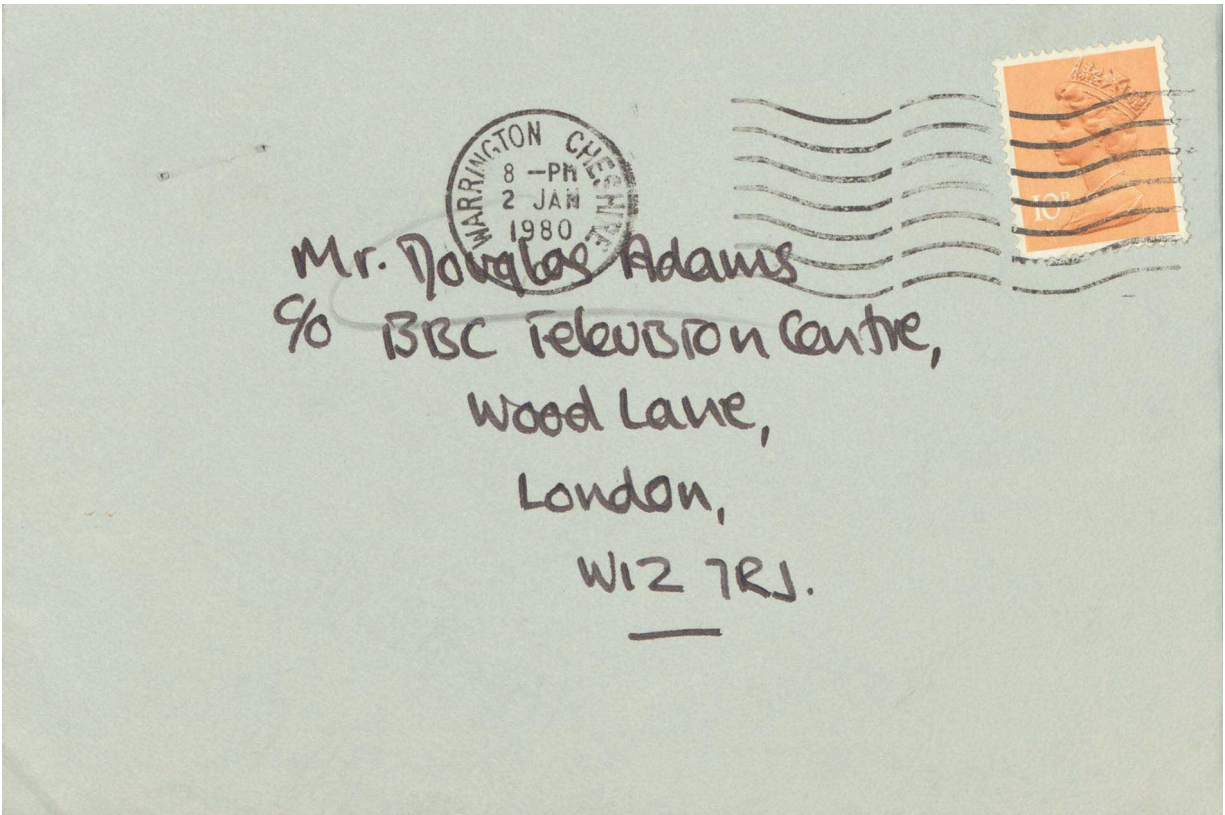


Grow at least three extra legs. You won't use
them, but it keeps the crowds amused.

Find one extremely good Brockian Ultra Cricket
Player. Clone him off a couple of hundred times.
It's a good idea to have a large amount of tedious selected
processes and challenges.

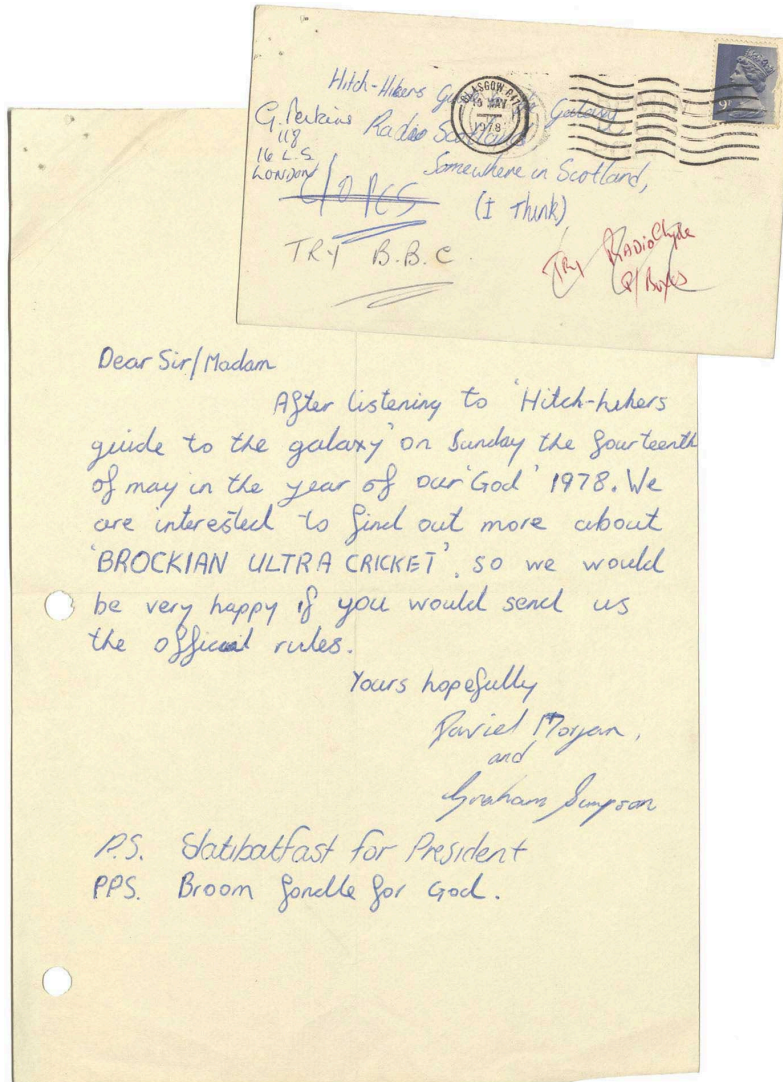
Put your team and the opposing team in a large
field and let them play. (This is the most common
because although Brockian Ultra Cricket is a
major spectator sport, the frustration
experienced by the audience in not actually
able to see what's going on leads them to think
that it's a lot more exciting than it really is.
They may not realize it at the time, but a
that has just seen a rather humdrum game ex-
periences a far less life-affirmation than a crowd that
it has just missed the most dramatic event in
sporting history.)

Throw lots of assorted items of sporting equipment
over the wall for the players. Anything will do, from
cricket bats, baseball bats, tennis rackets, or
anything you can get a good swing with.



As Douglas's fame grew, so did his post pile. Some letters contained requests for information, others were written in spoof *Hitchhiker* style, still others professed undying love. Evidently, Douglas scribbled 'ANS' or 'answered' at the top of each one as he replied (or, on one occasion: 'I think I answered this one, if not, fuck it'), and, as the letters came abundantly, he scaled back to brief notes on yellow cards, or to a standard, photocopied reply.

FIRST FAN LETTER



Radio producer Geoffrey Perkins said that the first series of *Hitchhiker's Guide* hit the airwaves in a blaze of indifference from BBC publicity and that the first they knew of any listeners was the arrival of an envelope addressed to 'Megadodo Publications, Megadodo House'. For decades legend had it that the envelope was marked in desperation by the postal service: 'Try BBC'. There's no mention of Megadodos on this envelope (above, top), but 'Try BBC' is clear. Dated May 1978, the letter inside seems to be Douglas's first piece of fan mail, from two lads in Glasgow. Douglas answered them (below) with a piece of script for Brockian Ultra Cricket, the game of hitting people for no apparent reason and then running away.

26th June 1978

Dear David Morgan and Graham Simpson,

Thank you very much for your letter about the Hitch-Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy. You asked to know the rules to Brockian Ultra cricket - here is a rough summary of the more important ones, as far as I can remember them (the full set of rules is so massively complex and huge that the only time they were all bound together into a single volume they underwent gravitational collapse and formed a black hole).

- 1) Grow at least three extra legs. You won't need them, but it keeps the crowd amused.
- 2) Find one extremely good Brockian Ultra Cricket Player. Clone him off a couple of hundred times - it saves an enormous amount of tedious selection procedures and training.
- 3) Put your team and the opposing team in a large field and build a wall round them. (This is because although Brockian Ultra Cricket is a major spectator sport, the frustration experienced by the audience is not actually being able to see what's going on leads them to imagine that it's a lot more exciting than it really is. They may not realize it at the time, but a crowd that has just seen a rather humdrum game experiences far less life affirmation than a crowd that believes it has just missed the most dramatic event in sporting history.)
- 4) Throw lots of assorted items of sporting equipment over the wall for the players. Anything will do, cricket bats, baseball bats, tennis rackets, skis, anything you can get a good swing with.

/over ..

- two -

- 5) The players should now lay about them for all they're worth with whatever they find to hand. Whenever a player scores a "hit" on another player he should immediately run away as fast as he can and apologise from a safe distance. Apologies should be concise, sincere, and for maximum clarity (and points) delivered through a megaphone.
- 6) The winning team shall be the first team that wins.

I hope this makes it all clear to you.

Thanks again for your letter,

Yours sincerely,

(Douglas Adams)

Mr. David Morgan and Mr. Graham Simpson

26th June 1978

Dear David Morgan and Graham Simpson,

Thank you very much for your letter about the Hitch-hiker's Guide to the Galaxy. You asked to know the rules to Brockian Ultra cricket - here is a rough summary of the more important ones, as far as I can remember them (the full set of rules is so massively complex and huge that the only time they were all bound together into a single volume they underwent gravitational collapse and formed a black hole).

1) Grow at least three extra legs. You won't need them, but it keeps the crowd amused.

2) Find one extremely good Brockian Ultra Cricket Player. Clone him off a couple of hundred times - it saves an enormous amount of tedious selection procedures and training.

3) Put your team and the opposing team in a large field and build a wall round them. (This is because although Brockian Ultra Cricket is a major spectator sport, the frustration experienced by the audience

in not actually being able to see what's going on leads them to imagine that it's a lot more exciting than it really is. They may not realize it at the time, but a crowd that has just seen a rather humdrum game experiences far less life affirmation than a crowd that believes it has just missed the most dramatic event in sporting history.)

4) Throw lots of assorted items of sporting equipment over the wall for the players. Anything will do, cricket bats, baseball bats, tennis raquets *[sic]*, skis, anything you can get a good swing with.

5) The players should now lay about them for all they're worth with whatever they find to hand. Whenever a player scores a "hit" on another player, he should immediately run away as fast as he can and apologise from a safe distance. Apologies should be concise, sincere, and for maximum clarity (and points) delivered through a megaphone.

6) The winning team shall be the first team that wins.

I hope this makes it all clear to you.

Thanks again for your letter,

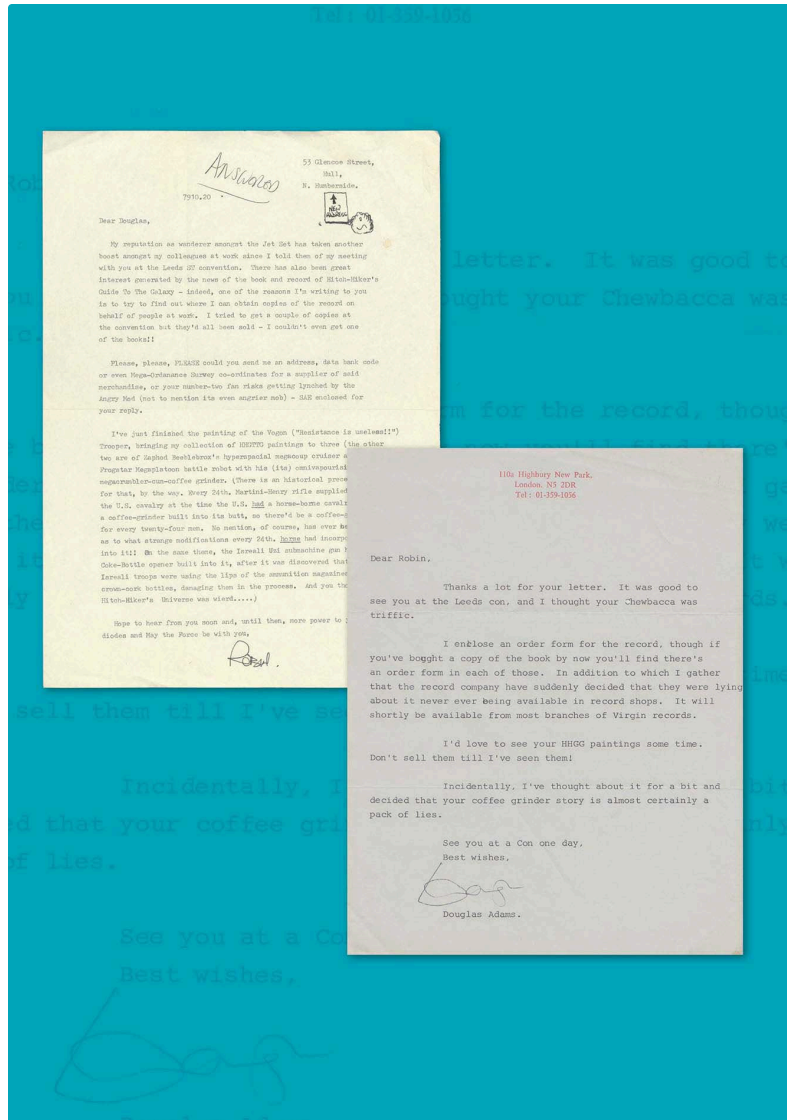
Yours sincerely,

(Douglas Adams)

Mr. David Morgan and Mr. Graham Simpson



FAN CLUBS AND ADORATION



This letter (above, top) comes from British Aerospace engineer Robin Hill, a gifted modelmaker, artist and lover of fancy dress (a cosplayer, if you will), whom Douglas met at a *Star Trek* convention held at The Dragonara Hotel in Leeds, UK, in October 1979. Douglas was a guest speaker and, after the event, Robin wrote to him from his home in Hull. The letter above (bottom) is Douglas's reply.

7, Oaklands Road,
Sutton Coldfield,
West Midlands,
B74 2TD.
5th November, 1979.

Douglas Adams,
c/o: BBC TV Centre,
London.

Dear Mr Adams,

This letter is to let you know just what is going on about the "Hitch-Hiker's Anonymous" group which is now starting in earnest. So far we have people allocated for handling membership, newsletter, Domain(s?), badges (etc.), etc. An initial meeting for interested people was held at NOVACON last weekend, and it soon overflowed into the corridor outside the room. He started taking registrations for membership at lunch-time on the last day of the Con, and have already got about 60 people who have actually joined, and many more who are interested, but had by then spent all their money at the bar.

One thing that became apparent very quickly at the meeting is that we would very much like you to be the Honorary President of the society. The number of people who wanted this was phenomenal, and so I hope that you will be able to agree, and I look forward to hearing from you on the subject sometime soon.

The plans so far are as follows:

Membership, etc. is being co-ordinated by Joy Hibbert, who is the person that everyone will first contact.

I am handling the newsletter, and therefore would be very interested in anything resembling news about "Hitch-Hiker's". I hope that you will be able to help us on this score, as we hope to be able to stamp out some of the rumours that are wandering around at the moment. Would it, for instance, be possible for us to send you a supply of stamped addressed envelopes in the hope that you could drop a note in one each time a "breakthrough" occurs?

Getting back to the point, which was the Committee structure (on a pre-historic planet!!! - sorry). We hope to be able to provide some forms of badges, posters, etc. This side will probably be handled by a chap called Stephen Edwards who works in the badge trade.

Owen Tudor is still around, though not on a full(spare)time basis (if you see what I mean), and he will be producing a fanzine (possibly called FLATBING).

I think that that's just about it at the moment, before we drag more people in to help with newsletter distribution, etc., except that we hope to hold some form of meeting (not a Convention to start with) for fans to get together, chat, be manually depressed and drink whatever we find to be the nearest Earth analog Cargle-Blasters.

I enclose with this letter a stamped addressed envelope, and find the time to answer some of the questions raised herein, and ideas of your own about the running of this group.

Finally then, I look forward to hearing from you, and more to to the next series, TV series, Book, film, towel, etc.

Yours sincerely,

André Willey
André Willey. (on behalf of Hitch-Hiker's Anonymous)



118a Highgate New Park,
London, N3 2DR
Tel: 01-359-1056
19 Nov 79

Dear Andre,

Thank you very much for your letter. I'm delighted that you've managed to set up HHA and that you've had such a ~~xxxxxx~~ response.

I've just written to Owen as well, and he has an update on latest developments. Not a lot at the moment, but there should be a flood of news towards the end of the year when the tv show starts getting into pre-production swing, when work starts on the film script, etc., etc.

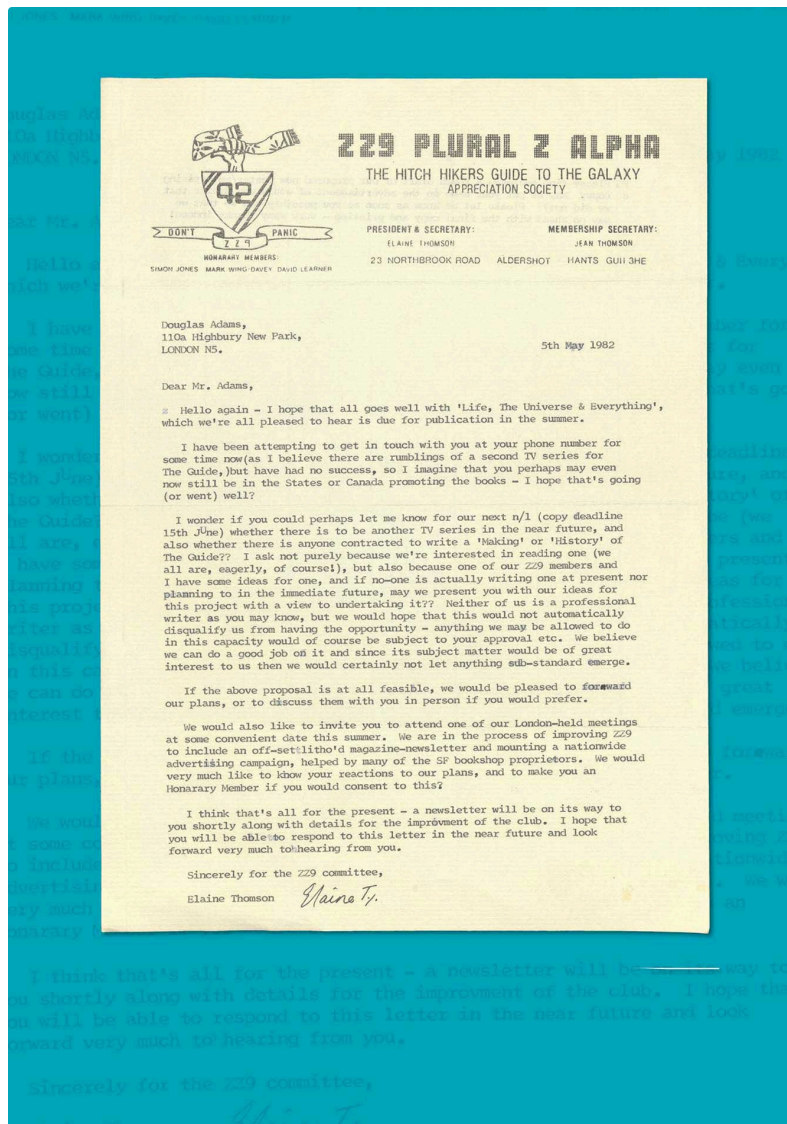
Please don't hesitate to get in touch if I can be of any help - phone is quicker.

Yes, I'd be delighted to be your Honorary President. thank you very much for asking me.

Looking forward to hearing from you further.
Best wishes,

Douglas Adams

Hitchhiker's Anonymous was an early attempt at running a fan club for the series. André Willey from the West Midlands wrote to Douglas in November 1979 (above, top) to ask Douglas if he would officially endorse the club as its Honorary President. Of course, Douglas readily agreed (above, bottom). André took the signed photo of Douglas at a *Doctor Who* convention in 1979.



If Hitchhiker's Anonymous (see [previous page](#)) was the first, the second and longer-running *Hitchhiker's* fan club is 'ZZ9 Plural Z Alpha: the Hitch Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy Appreciation Society', which is still going. In May 1982, the original president and founder Elaine Thomson wrote to Douglas, having failed to contact him by phone, to ask him for his approval on the notion of her and another club member writing a 'Making' or 'History' of the *Hitchhiker's Guide* and inviting him to come to a London meeting and take honorary membership of the Club. Douglas accepted his Honorary membership, but sadly never attended a formal ZZ9 event.

86 Holland Park
London W11
727 3408
Jan 19th 1980

ANSWERED

Dear Douglas Adams -

I am a freelance 'illustrator' (airbrush, editorial, publishing etc.) ~ which along with script writing, cab-driving and journalism must be one of the most anti-social jobs in existence - and here I am, true to form, at 1.50 am. on New Year's Day, with two perfectly good parties to go to, stuck at home with an airbrush, a radio and an impossible dead line for composing!

As you might imagine I'm feeling pretty bloody - Kenny Everett's over, all my friends are out having a good time and I have to finish a poster of John Garfield & Lina Turner before morning!

The single thing that makes life bearable at this moment is my timely, much-thumbed copy of the 'Hitch-Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy'!

You may find it ironic that, as a girl much given to panic most of the time - find the words 'Don't Panic' on the cover, it started

at for several minutes, most re-assuring! Life mimics fiction!

So what I wanted you to know is that at moments like this, when I seriously consider chucking 'it' in and getting a steady job like war correspondent or digital watch assembler, I reach for your book and mentally hitch a lift with Ford, Zaphod & Co. and somehow the world doesn't look quite so bad when I get back!

I suppose this is really a fan letter, although I freely admit that at the moment (1.15 a.m.) it feels more like a complaint to the world in general and magazine editors in particular! So please accept my compliments on the 'Guide' and my best wishes for future efforts.

Also, as a devoted fan of Dr Who since the days when I used to hide behind the sofa when the Daleks appeared, thanks for re-vitalizing the series - in the words of another science-fiction character - may both you and the Doctor live long and prosper!

There is one thing that I most urgently

would like to know - is there to be a sequel to the 'Guide'? I cannot believe that you could leave a perfectly good starship, cast of characters and devoted public (me) stranded in hyperspace! Please let me know - much as I love the 'Guide' - and however many times I can happily re-read it - I know how it feels!

- so - it lacks that element of suspense!

Well, I have to get back to Lina Turner - Happy New Decade - may it heap more laurels upon you - or something!

Yours appreciatively -

Shelley Page

P.S. - if you ever need a really snappy piece of airbrush illustration at 2.00 in the morning!

This letter is from Shelley Page, a graphic designer who later became a Disney artist, working on movies such as *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* (1988). Douglas was intrigued by her beautifully written letter and invited her out for a drink. Shelley says they enjoyed a short-lived relationship. Sadly, she has lost Douglas's letter of reply.

64 STATION RD
KINGS HEATH
BIRMINGHAM
B14 7 SR
Tel: 021 444 7712

Ans

Dear Douglas*/Mr Adams*/Hoopy Frood*/
Genius*/Ravenous Bogbolder Beast of Trial* -
[Delete whichever is not applicable].

Hi there! You don't know me and I don't know
you either, but I'm writing to inform you that you have
most probably saved me from the depths of manic depression.
I had applied for an M.A at a Polytechnic which shall remain
nameless, namely Manchester, and after having been rejected
I decided that life was no longer worth living - but, something
deep inside made me put on "The Hitch-Hiker's Guide to the
Galaxy" L.P. After listening to someone who was even more
miserably depressed than myself and the hilariously hysterical
version of the Vogen poem, how could I feel bad?

I would dearly love to know if there are any plans for more
radio episodes apart from the repeats for which the BBC is
renowned? I watched "Ask Aspel", a few weeks ago and Mark
Wing-Davey was on much to my delight; he mentioned the
fact that another TV series would appear on our screens some-
time next year. Frankly (or maybe Douglasly), I just cannot
imagine how that could ever come about because all the
episodes from the radio, books, L.P.s and T.V. have already
been very mixed up. Although, Mark did say that it will begin
and end at a cricket match - the mind boggles!

I would love to know how you chose the actors for the
parts because Mark seems to be an ideal Zaphod, even
though he's got blond hair. [If you ever meet him, can
you ask him if he remembers a guy called Rodney
Haigh - cuz I know his wife. Why did Geoffrey
McGovern not continue with the role of Ford Prefect?]

MARY QUINN

2.

Actually I'm glad that David Dixon is playing
Ford Prefect, because he is just how I imagined Ford to
look and he's got fabulously blue eyes! [My favourite
colour]. If you've got any spare photographs of the
characters floating about [the photos I mean] - is there
any chance of me acquiring them - autographed if possible.
[N.B. - I will stoop to almost any level to get them].

I think Arthur [Simon Jones] is so fantastic that I
cannot praise him enough - so I won't; I mean he's just
so "not with it": I have a teddy bear called Arthur, but I
called him that before I knew of the "other" Arthur, because
that name actually means "The noble bear man" - very
original! I also have a little blue-fluffy rabbit who's called
Peter, but that means "a rock" - so where did I go wrong?

One of my many hobbies is collecting names, their origins
and meanings, so if you've any spare ones up your sleeve....
..... Actually, names are funny things if you ever look up
their meanings - Douglas, for instance means - "from the
dark stream" - are you? Ford, means "the river crossing"
[pretty obvious wasn't it?] and Marvin, would you believe,
means "famous friend" - I couldn't find out what Zaphod
and Slartibartfast mean.

I am a Graphic Design student in my final year at
Birmingham Polytechnic [don't laugh - I would love to know
what's so funny about that place]. Anyway I will soon be
unleashed onto an unsuspecting and unprepared world -
so watch out! I was recently doing a project and much to
my surprise, I found that the typeface I was using was
and still is, called "Marvin", of all things. I'm also doing
a poster for "Hitch-Hiker", so if you would let me know
what your address is, I will send you a print of it. My sister
was wondering where she could get a jacket like Ford's and

MARY QUINN

3.

I was wondering if I could sort of borrow Zaphod's
jacket to wear at my final show, because I'm going
to miss one episode of "Hitch-Hiker" because of the
show. Could I have the real head with it, so that I'll
have someone to talk to - The Degree show will be open
to the public on the 2nd and 3rd July from 10am - 8pm
and on the 4th July from 10am - 4pm, and you'd be very
welcome, if you decided to come. I'm very glad that
there's a "Hitch-Hiker" convention in Birmingham this year -
is there any chance of ensuring that I could definitely get
there? What exactly does one do at such a convention -
I've never been to one before. Anyway, it's been great
writing to you - I don't expect you'll have time to write
back but I'll wait with great anticipation.

Yours hopefully
Ewa Kuczynski [Miss].

P.S. - I'll try to see you at the convention, but if not,
I shall find some other way.

P.P.S. - Give my thanks to Marvin for being more depressed
than I was.

P.P.P.S. - Could you possibly tell me how, when and where
Zaphod, Ford and Arthur shave?

P.P.P.P.S. - I'm not married, have no children and do not
live in Surrey either.

MARY QUINN

DOUGLAS ADAMS

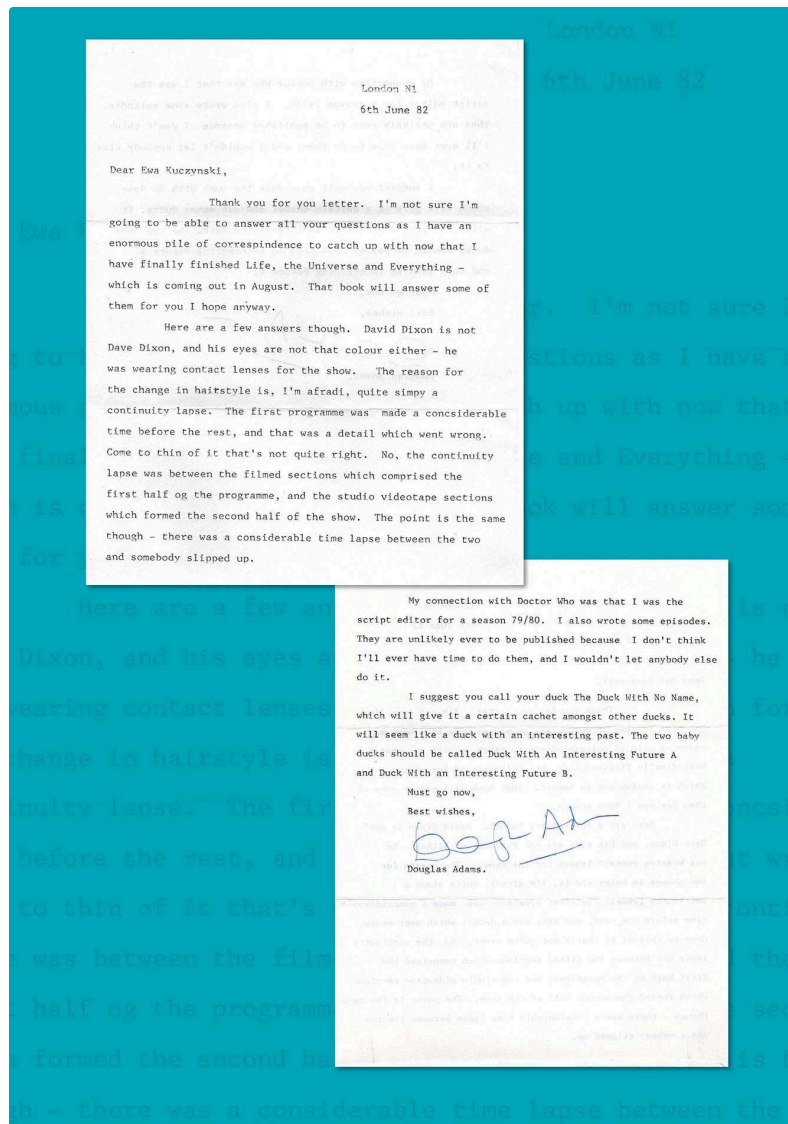
Dear Ewa,

Thanks for your letter. Sorry
about the enclosed sheet, hope
you understand.

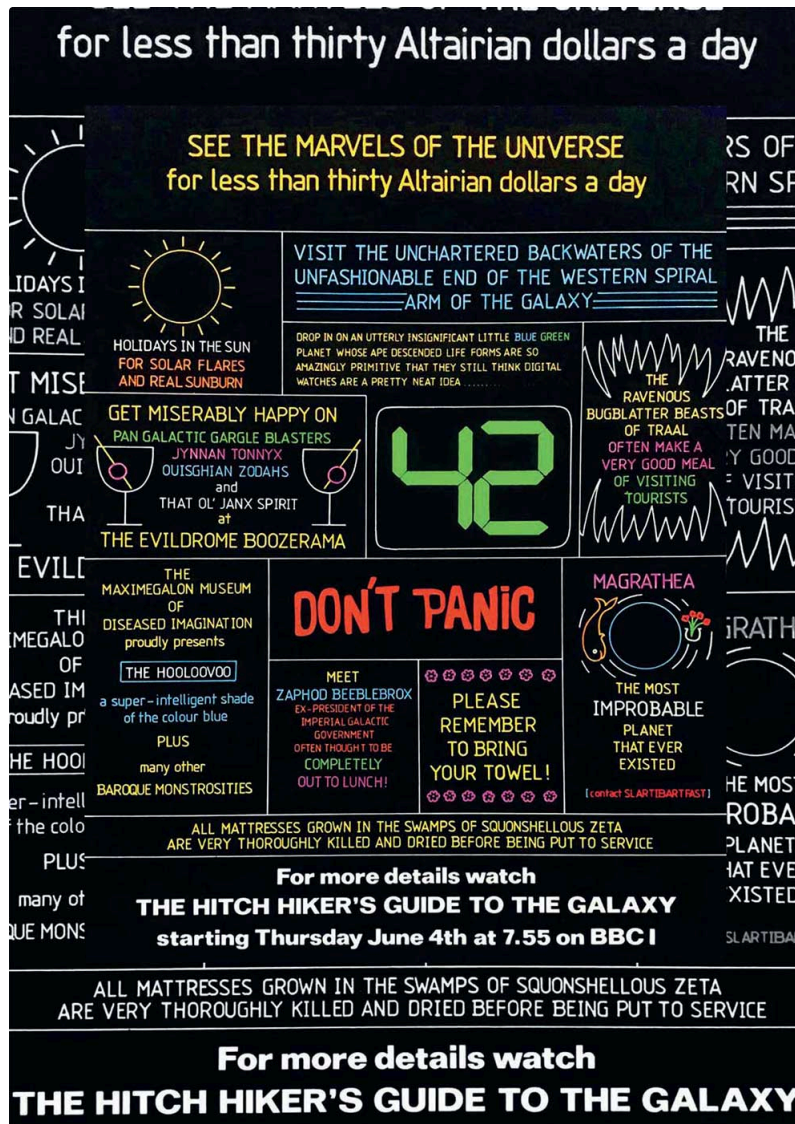
Geoff McGovern wasn't available
when the t.v. show was being cast -
he was in "The Dress" in the West
End.

I'm afraid I think it's highly
unlikely that the BBC would hire out
Zaphod costume - but you could
always ask them.

Best wish
Doug Adams



Another letter (above), in a beautiful hand, from a graphic designer called Ewa Kuczynski, then a Manchester Polytechnic art student, who lived in Birmingham. In the letter, she refers to a poster she mocked up to promote the *Hitchhiker's* TV series (overleaf). Douglas replied to her more than once – the first time was a short handwritten note on yellow cards, accompanied by a photocopied standard letter (see [page 179](#)). However, when Ewa wrote again (a letter that's now sadly missing), Douglas responded with a fuller, typed letter about the gap in continuity of Ford's hair in the TV series (above and bottom).



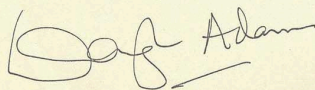
Ewa Kuczynski's poster art, loosely based on the graphics used for the *Hitchhiker's Guide* TV series. She refers to the poster in her first letter to Douglas, reproduced on [page 176](#).

Highbury, London N5.

I'm sorry to have to send you this photocopied letter, but I don't employ a secretary, and if I try to answer every letter individually I simply don't get any writing done. Since I find I am answering the same questions fairly often, here are the answers to those questions.

- 1) I'm afraid I don't have any photographs of myself. My mother says she has one of me she took in her garden five years ago but I've seen it and it's not very good. The focus is all wrong.
- 2) My doctor has warned me not to attempt any further explanations or rationalisations of the plot of Hitch Hiker.
- 3) The books are different from the radio series because the series were written serially and I didn't know what was going to happen next. The books were written with the benefit of hindsight and I tried to make better use and sense of the material.
- 4) There will not, after all be a second television, not for the time being at least. Please don't write and ask me why, a) because it's a secret and b) because...
- 5) I am busy writing a third book. This will be called LIFE, THE UNIVERSE AND EVERYTHING, and will be all new. It will continue where the first two books left off and should be published round about late spring next year.
- 6) There may be a new record album but I don't know what will be on it.
- 7) There may yet be more Hitch Hiker on radio, but I'm not even thinking about it till next year.
- 8) There is a very good chance that there will one day be a Hitch Hiker feature film, but all that I know about it is contained in this sentence.
- 9) For news of Marvin's career as a solo recording artist write to the Marvin Depreciation Society, 2 Whitechurch Lane, London E1.

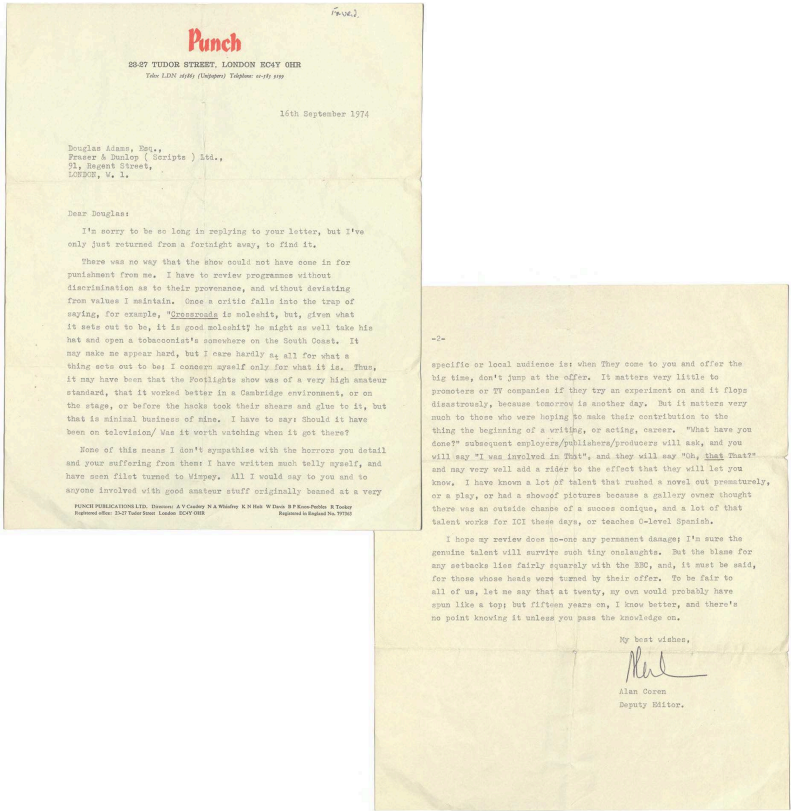
I hope this covers what you want to know,
Best wishes,



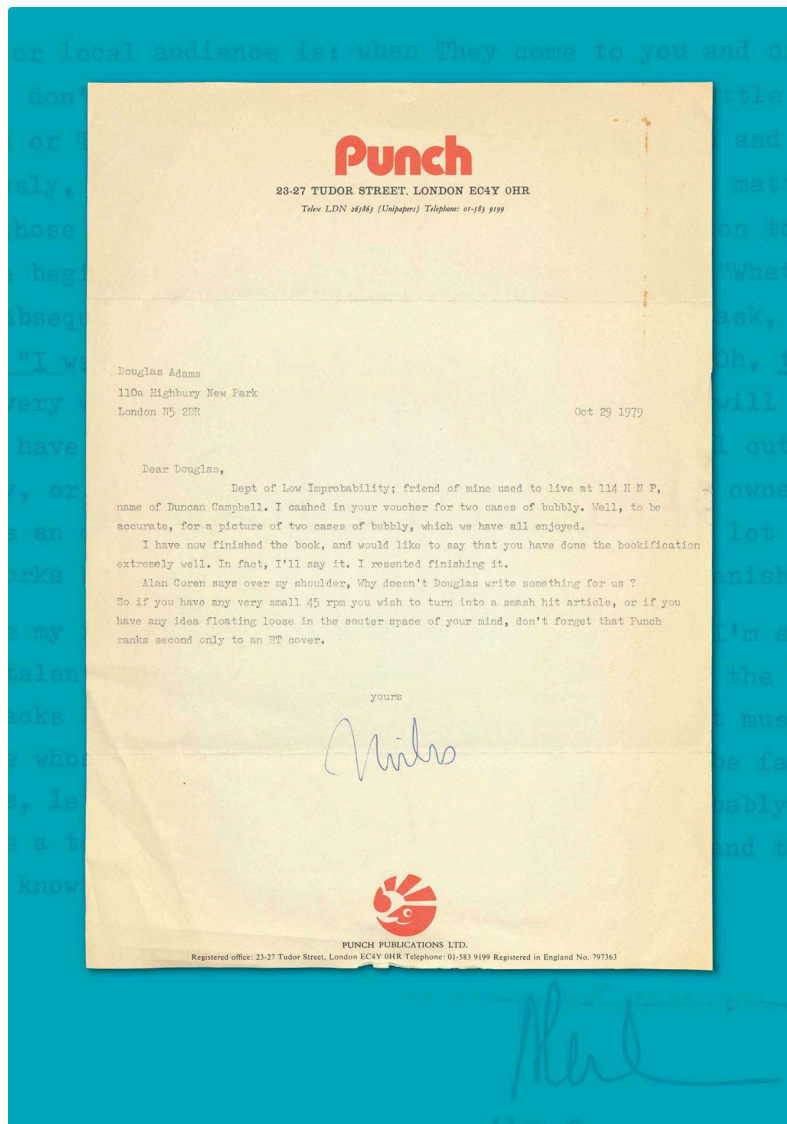
Douglas Adams.

This is a copy of the standard reply many people got from Douglas once the demands on his time became too great and the fan letters too numerous for him to reply personally every time.

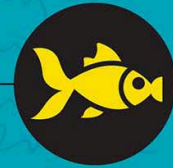
CRITIC CORRESPONDENCE



Of course, not all of Douglas's letters represent fan mail. Douglas, disappointed by some harsh criticism in *Punch* magazine regarding the May Week revue's TV broadcast in 1974 (for which Adams-Smith-Adams had written many of the sketches), seems to have complained by letter and got the following response from critic and satirist Alan Coren. He encourages Douglas not to lose heart from the negative review, nor to accept offers of the big time from TV executives too readily.



In 1979, a few years after Douglas received the letter from Alan Coren (opposite), Coren's colleague Miles Kington wrote praising Douglas for his 'bookification' of *Hitchhiker's Guide*. Coren himself also gets a mention – generously offering Douglas the opportunity to submit material to their magazine.



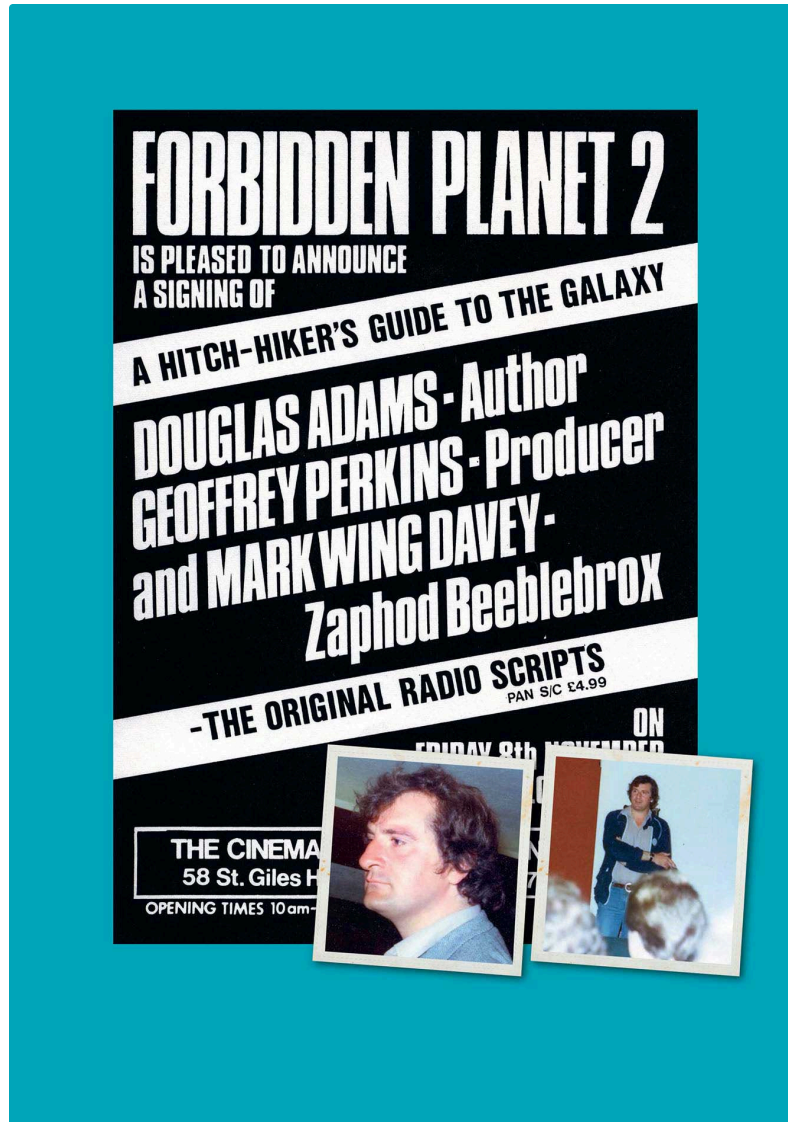
EIGHT

Fame, Flying and Awards



Douglas's first formal book signing was in October 1979. He told people it was so well attended that he had trouble getting out of the taxi, through the crowds and into the venue. Whether or not that's true, fame had certainly come knocking: the invitations to speak and enthral flooded in, and he was even honoured with his own portrait (above) in the National Portrait Gallery, London.

SIGNINGS AND SPEECHES



In September 1980, Douglas flew up to Glasgow, Scotland, to be guest of honour at Hitchercon One (so far the only convention of its kind). Douglas delivered his speech and judged the fancy dress. The flier is for another of many signings that Douglas attended over the years. This one was in 1985 for the launch of the *Radio Scripts* book.

Pacing around

File

Not here to talk about
technology-

- HTTP interface - Microsoft

Instead I thought I'd try and
answer the two questions that
writers get asked all the time.

Where do you get all your ideas
from?

Does your hand hurt yet?

Don't know what they think ~~well~~
we all do all day, but that is
what people ask.

And the time they ask it, of
course, is when you're doing signing
sessions. Signing sessions are the

Douglas's notebooks are filled with jottings of what were clearly intended to become speeches. We have no idea whether this speech ever made it in front of an audience but it is an insightful musing on the problem of the same question faced by an author at his or her book signing. The notes are transcribed overleaf.

bane of a writer's life, because the second worst thing that can happen is that dozens, scores, even hundreds of people can turn up, each wanting you to write something really personal and different and witty in their books. And the very worst thing is that no one turns up at all.

But they are mostly friendly cheerful people who turn up. They know there's not going to be much of a chance for a chat, especially if there are going to be lots of people, but they want to be able to say something friendly and cheerful as you're sitting downing away at one friendly person's signature after another, so they say 'Does your hand hurt yet?'

And you smile and say no, it's coming up fine, and thanks for asking.

The trouble is that people have recently figured out that they are going to say that before they actually get to the bookstalls, and one of them is, of course, going to find themselves first in line. So he's ~~there~~ all ready to ask if my hand hurts yet, but he's first in line. So he thinks 'Damn! Damn!' and then thinks 'I'll say to anyway. So, in a very friendly cheerful way he says, illogically and out of nowhere 'Does your hand hurt yet?'

And the person in the line behind him thinks 'Damn! That's what I was going to say.'

Pacing around.

(A6, or F16?)

Not here to talk about technology –
HHGG interface – Microsoft.

Instead, I thought I'd try and answer the two questions that writers get asked all the time. 'Where do you get all your ideas from?'
'Does your hand hurt yet?'

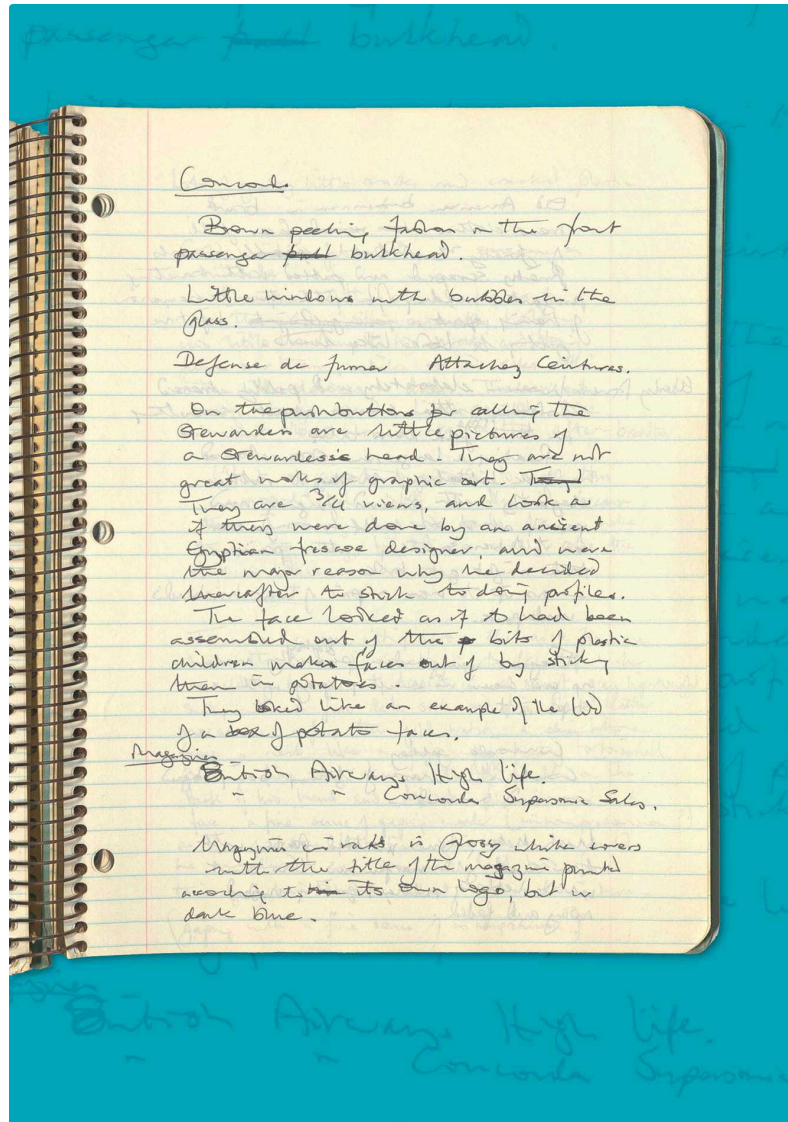
Don't know what they think we all do all day, but that is what people ask. And the time they ask it, of course, is when you're doing signing sessions. Signing sessions are the bane of a writer's life, because the second worst thing that can happen is that dozens, scores, even hundreds of people can turn up, each wanting you to write something really personal and different and witty in their books. And the very worst thing is that no one turns up at all.

But they are mostly friendly cheerful people who turn up. They know there's not going to be much of a chance for a chat, especially if there are going to be lots of people, but they want to be able to say something friendly and cheerful as you're sitting churning away at one friendly personal signature after another, so they say 'Does your hand hurt yet?' And you smile and say no, it's bearing up fine, and thanks for asking.

The trouble is that people have usually figured out that they are going to say that before they actually get to the bookstore, and one of them is, of course, going to find themselves first in line so he's all ready to ask if my hand hurts yet, but he's first in line. So, he thinks 'Damn, Damn!' And then thinks I'll say it anyway. So, in a very friendly cheerful way he says, illogically and out of nowhere, 'Does your hand hurt yet?' And the person in the line behind him thinks 'Damn! That's what I was going to say.'



FLYING THE WORLD



During the 1980s, Douglas's success coupled with his passion for cutting-edge technology perhaps contributed to his preferred use of Concorde when he needed to cross the Atlantic. But the plane's interior décor was already looking a bit tired by 1984, when Douglas jotted down the observations above and over the following pages (and transcribed on [page 191](#)). Some of the other passengers weren't immune to his close scrutiny, either!

Old American businessmen in brand
new clothes ~~to~~ ^{revised} faces full
of finely burnt good ~~various~~ vessels
finely scraped and patted with sweet
perfumant, nodding. At with the explanation
of having spent a year ~~getting~~ ⁱⁿ the life here
getting to look like that.

Oldly American women elaborately and palely dressed
looking rather sombre about something
on their ^{little} high hair table.

Reading a large new storm-clawed
handbook ~~believed~~, holding it rather
elegantly with pincered fingers, and
peering at it over half moon glasses
as if it was something rather precious
that might get broken.
— as if it was a pair of their husbands
underpants.

Elegant young ladies, perfectly made
up and dressed in swifter gray with a
stipe in it.

Conscious gilly
Colonial dress of ~~them~~ ^{being} ~~up~~
over and around.

Dark heter. One wrinkled plastic with
the short add margin and the short
white letter, rather heavily matted
away and faded.

Lots of gaudy little marks and cracked plastic.

Cold waiting for something or someone in
a hillside.

Description of the alien who can't
bear the cold, sitting miserably huddled
was little hands up to his mouth and doing
funny ones then, while all his sales rattled.
The little devices or dikes. Those weren't
enough to go round. Little squabbles broke
out about whose turn it was on the after-breath.

(But an important point is to make this
a normal level. Not obviously cold, become
there I always try and make things - make
things too long, but hit to about - relax the
style a little.)

There's a man sitting across the aisle from me
who is the man I was trying to describe earlier
— an elderly businessman, dressed in a smart grey high-tail
suit, with do fine dark socks and fine black leather
mechanism, a fine thin gold watch, a chain like a
page a neck. Was a frog, ~~the~~ heavy tortoiseshell
frames, fine, dry skin with little freckles on the
back of his hand and delicate fingers, and on his
face, a fine sense of quiet wonder (incomprehension?)
as if, for the first time since he was a child
he wondered, and wondered till his fine
thin grey hair tinged, what he was doing here.
(gaps with a fine sense of incomprehension.)

The man on my left is very serious,
refuses all drinks, and reads about India.
Has a heavy glasser.

I had the feeling that he was about to
lean over, put me on the hand with
his fine dry ~~loose~~ for loose skinned
fingers, maybe gaze, and say "Young
man, are you describing me?"

The sun shone brightly through the
window, refracting, and doing designs
from the fifties on the ~~base~~ peeling
brown fabric.

resembles
nothing so much
as a frog, who,
at the end of
his life is
strangely
beak-like

yellow ochre
The pale brown repeating design on
the matt plastic walls seemed to be
~~based on something~~ a kind of ^{extraneous} fantasia
based on something gynaecological and
the ~~no~~ remains of a kipper.

Window shutter. Plastic window shutter

Here's my current argument about my
poor book.

- That if my ~~course~~ I knew
that my course is wrong, I seem
unable to convert it until it goes
wrong, till disaster strikes.

We are currently travelling at Mark 2

Concorde

Brown peeling Fablon on the front passenger bulkhead.

Little windows with bubbles in the glass.

Defense de fumer. Attachez Ceintures.

On the pushbuttons for calling the stewardess are little pictures of a stewardess's head. They are not great works of graphic art. They are $\frac{3}{4}$ views, and look as if they were done by an ancient Egyptian fresco designer and were the major reason why he decided thereafter to stick to doing profiles. The face looked as if it had been assembled out of the bits of plastic children make faces out of by sticking them in potatoes.

They looked like an example of the lid of a box of potato faces.

Magazines

British Airways High Life.

“ “ Concorde Supersonic Sales

Magazines in racks in glossy white covers with the title of the magazine printed according to its own logo, but in dark blue.

Old American businessmen in brand new clothes, faces full of finely burst blood vessels finely scraped and patted with something pungent, nodding off with the exhaustion of having spent a lifetime getting to look like that.

Elderly American woman, elaborately and palely dressed, looking rather sombre about something on their little fold-down table.

Reading a large new straw-coloured hardback bestseller, holding it rather elegantly with pincered fingers, and peering at it over half-moon glasses as if it was something rather precious and might get broken.

as if it was a pair of their husband's underpants.

Elegant young ladies laden, perfectly (darkly) made up and dressed in something grey with a stripe in it.

Concorde galley

Continual chaos of things being tipped over and smashed.

Mach Meter – Blue moulded plastic with the smart gold margin and the smart white lettering rather heavily rubbed away and faded.

Lots of grubby little marks and cracked plastic.

Cold waiting for something or someone on a hillside.

Description of the alien, who can't bear the cold, sitting miserably holding his little hands up to his mouth and blowing fumes over them, while all his scales rattled. The little devices or drinks. There weren't enough to go round. Little squabbles broke out about whose turn it was on the after-breather.

(But an important point is to make this a normal level. Not absurdly cold, because I always try and overdo things – make things too big, too hot, too absurd – relax the style a little.)

There's a man sitting across the aisle from me who is the man I was trying to describe earlier – an elderly businessman, dressed in a smart grey lightweight suit, with fine dark socks and fine black leather moccasins, a fine thin gold watch, a neck like a frog's, heavy tortoiseshell glasses, fine, dry skin with dark freckles on the back of his hand and delicate fingernails, and on his face, a fine sense of gaping wonder (incomprehension?) as if, for the first time since he was a child he wondered and wondered, till his fine, thin grey hair tingled, what he was doing here.

(gaping with a fine sense of incomprehension.)

The man on my left is very serious, refuses all drinks, and reads about India through heavy glasses.

I had the feeling he was about to lean over, pat me on the hand with his fine dry loose-skinned fingers, maybe gape and say, 'Young man, are you describing me?'

The sun shone brightly through the window, refracting, and doing designs from the fifties on the peeling brown Fablon.

The pale brown and yellow ochre repeating design on the matt plastic walls seemed to be a kind of extravagant fantasia based on something gynaecological and the remains of a kipper. [Marginalia: Resembles nothing so much as a frog, who, at the end of his life is strangely bewildered.]

Window shutter. Plastic window shutter.

Here's my current argument about my poor book.

– That if I know that my course is wrong, I seem unable to correct it until it goes wrong, till disaster strikes.

We are currently travelling at Mach 2.



That done we could finally relax about the baggage and start seriously to worry about the state of the plane which was terrifying. Mark told me that Merpati bought their plane 2nd hand from Uganda Airways, but I think he was joking. The door to the pilot's cockpit remained open for the duration of the flight, or might actually have ~~been~~ been missing entirely.

I have a ~~conscious~~ ^{cheerful} and an oddly reckless ~~fantastic~~ view of air travel. It rarely bothers me at all. I don't think this is bravery, because I am for instance frequently scared stiff in cars, particularly if I'm driving, but aeroplanes but once you're in an aeroplane everything is completely out of your hands so you may just as well sit back and grin manically about the grinding and rattling noises and the turbulence which turns the plane all over the sky like a leaf.

DON'T MAKE LIGHT OF YOUR LIFE.

Not all of Douglas's plane travel was quite as luxurious as he might have found on Concorde (see previous pages). During his trip to Africa for *Last Chance to See* (see [pages 240-51](#)), his experience was quite different. This page from his notebook sets out some of his observations of a rusty light aircraft displaying a dubious-looking state of repair.

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I have an oddly reckless and cheerful view of air travel. It rarely bothers me at all. I don't think this is bravery, because I am for instance frequently scared stiff in cars, particularly if I'm driving, but once you're in an aeroplane everything is completely out of your

hands so you may just as well sit back and grin manically about the grinding and rattling noises and the turbulence which threw the plane all over the sky like a leaf.



AND THE WINNER IS...



Douglas was presented with his first (of several) Golden Pan Awards at a ceremony in the sparkling mirror-tiled nightclub venue of the Kensington Roof Gardens, London. The publisher, Pan Books, was keen to celebrate the company's first ever million-selling Pan Original and the fact that Douglas was the youngest author ever to sell a million copies, aside from Anne Frank. Douglas received a little golden statuette of the cloven-hoofed Pan to mark the occasion and took the microphone, saying, 'I've known about this award for a while, and I'm glad to say my acceptance speech is very nearly ready' – a nod to his legendary lateness when it came to writing. Douglas's personal guests at the ceremony included his younger siblings Jane (in the photo right, holding the statuette)

and James (far left), his mother Janet and his step-father Ron Thrift.

On 'Bop Ad'

Soga Ala

ly underwater
Soga Ala

Douglas Adams

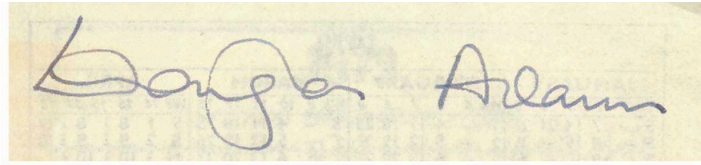
Douglas Adams.

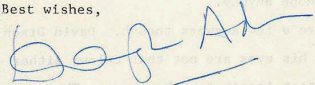
Soga Ala

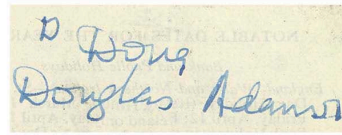
Douglas Adams

Douglas Adams

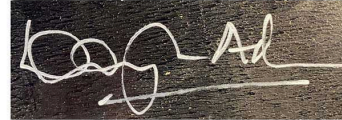
DOUGLAS N. ADAMS.

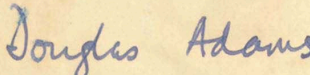


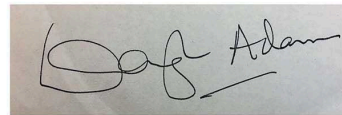
Best wishes,

Douglas Adams.



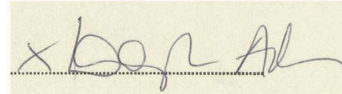

Doug Adams

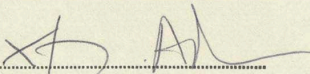


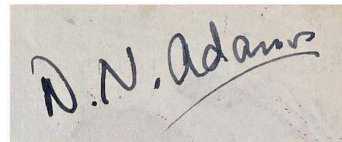

Douglas Adams

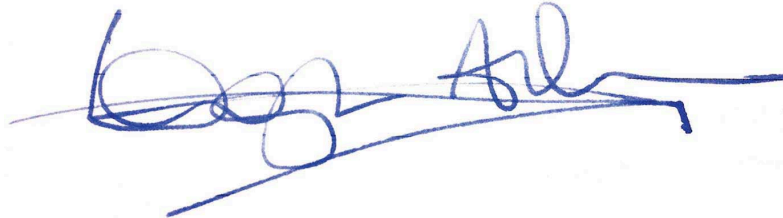



Douglas Adams




Doug Adams

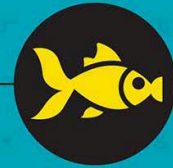




Even as a callow youth, it seems Douglas was practising his autograph for some future starry purpose. In July 1980, as part of his warm-up video before the first screening of the TV pilot of *Hitchhiker*, Peter Jones ('The Voice of the Book') cracked the joke about Douglas having signed so many copies of the paperback that an unsigned copy was now worth more than one with the author's mark. The notion was later applied to other authors who were also prodigious signers, such as Terry Pratchett. It's fair to say Douglas did enjoy a good signing tour. He travelled the globe, meeting his fans and scribbling like crazy, so it seems inevitable that his signature would eventually shrink, saving on ink and a very tired left arm. For a man who did not really like being called 'Doug', it seems funny that after many iterations, his distinctive signature ended up being a squiggle that fans in ZZ9 Plural Z

Alpha: the Hitch Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy
Appreciation Society (see [page 174](#)) adopted as their
hero's unofficial nickname – 'Bop Ad'.

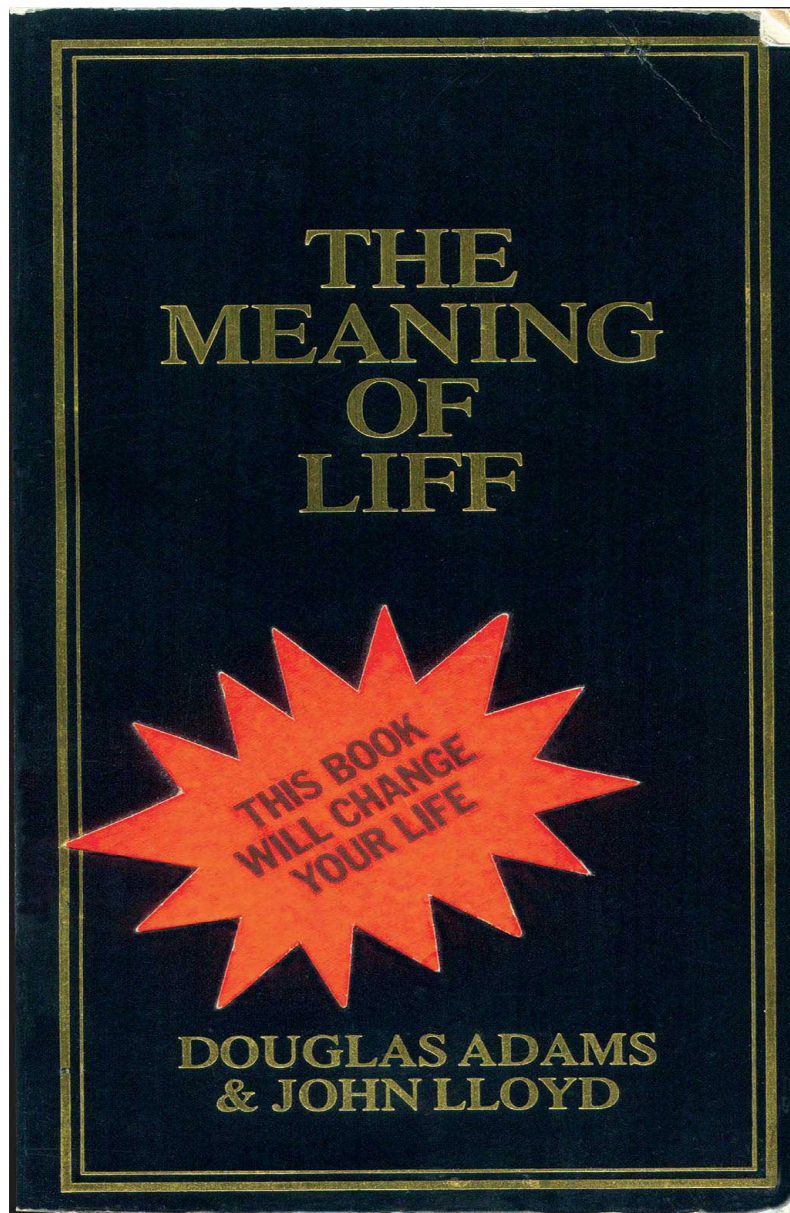
A trawl through the archive reveals this shortening
went one step further... a medical inoculation form
(when Douglas was about to tour the world seeking out
some of its most endangered species for his book *Last
Chance to See*; see [pages 240–251](#)) proves that a
cursory 'D.Ad-' would sometimes also suffice. Here are
some of the fuller iterations of Douglas's signature.



NINE

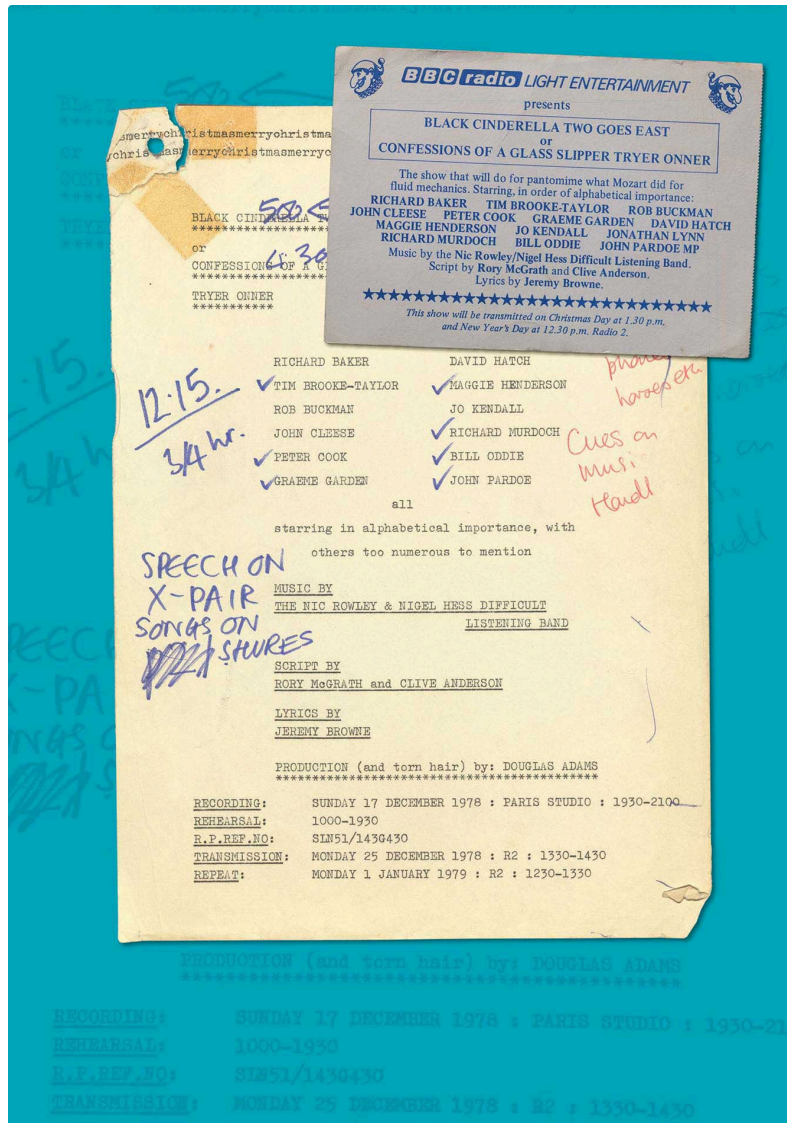
Later

Invitations to Collaborate



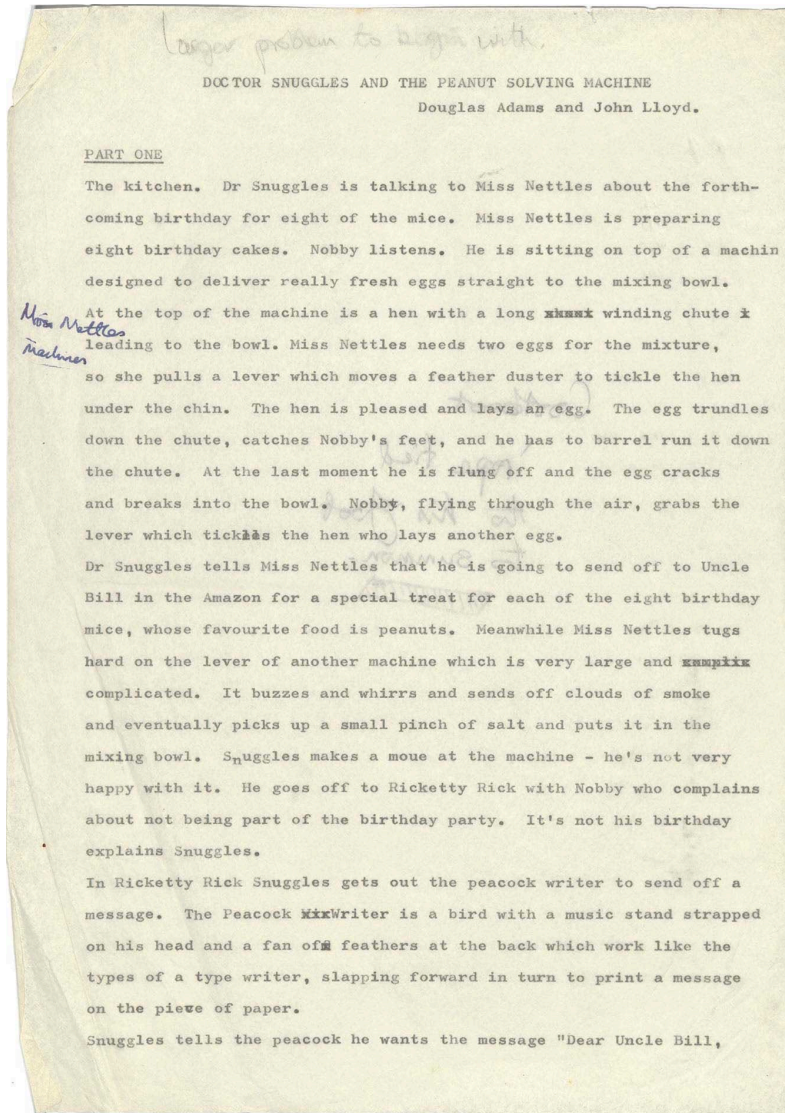
As Douglas's success with *Hitchhiker* grew, so others sought the fruits of his writing talent. Some of those collaborations were with long-standing friends and colleagues (*The Meaning of Liff* with John Lloyd being a case in point), but the archive also points to new ventures with some perhaps more unexpected famous names.

FOOTLIGHTS PANTO

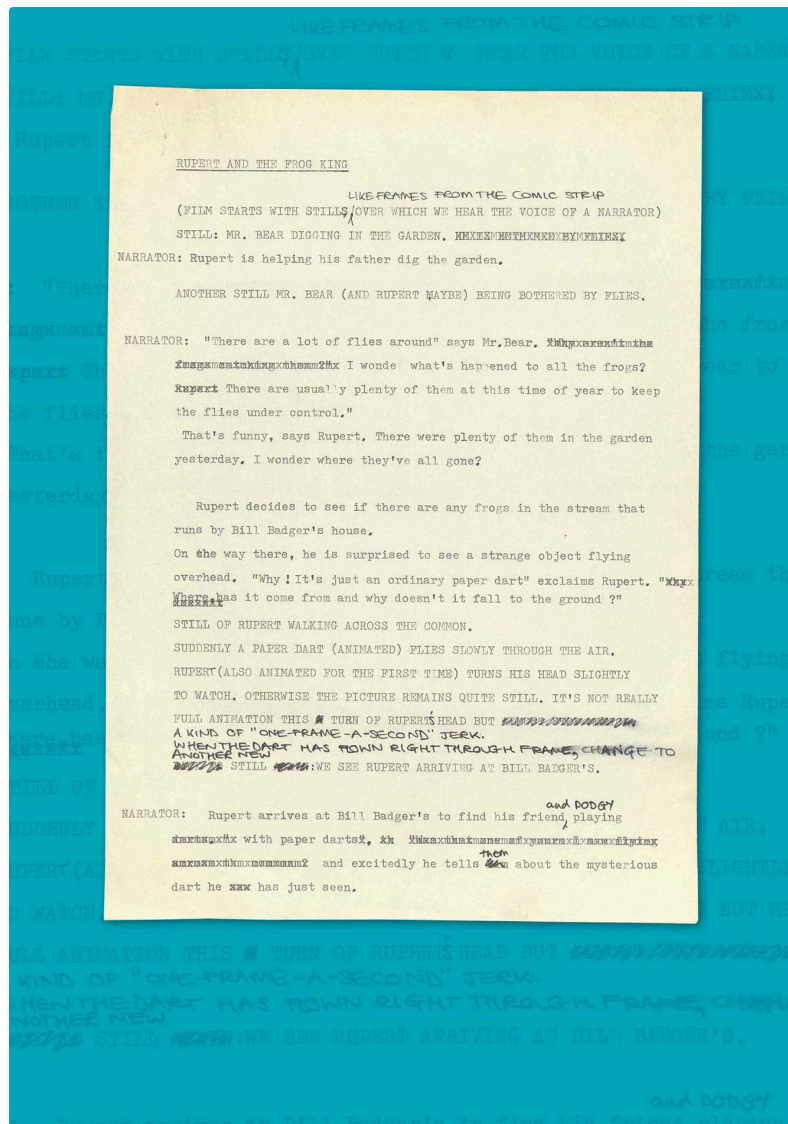


BBC broadcaster and executive David Hatch recruited Douglas in early 1977 as a radio producer. Although Douglas's output was frequently disorganized and less than prolific, the immediate success of *Hitchhiker's Guide* in March 1978 had earned him a certain kudos. That year Hatch appointed Douglas to produce the 95th anniversary Footlights pantomime (ticket, inset), the star-studded *Black Cinderella Two Goes East or Confessions of a Glass Slipper Tryer Onner*, from a script by Clive Anderson and Rory McGrath. Getting Peter Cook and John Cleese to appear must have been something of a casting coup.

KIDS' STUFF



The *Hitchhiker's Guide* on radio had caught the ear of the Irish actor and writer Jeffrey O'Kelly, who sought out Douglas and John Lloyd for help with his TV cartoon series *Doctor Snuggles*. The two turned in several outlines and a couple of scripts that were actually made. This material for *Doctor Snuggles and the Peanut Solving Machine* is one of several pieces for the series that survives in Douglas's archives.



In October 1981 Paul McCartney's company MPL and Douglas's literary agent Ed Victor struck a deal for Douglas to write (with Terry Jones and John Lloyd, who were also asked) an animated short involving newspaper cartoon character Rupert the Bear – McCartney had held the rights to a film of the character for some years. These first two pages show how the film might have developed from static frames, as per the original newspaper comic strips, into fully fledged animation. The film eventually became known as the award-winning short *Rupert and the Frog Song* (1984).

STILL: BILL THROWS A DART.

SECOND STILL: THE DART FALLS TO THE GROUND A FEW FEET AWAY.

"No

"Oh it was probably one of mine" says Bill. "They're very good. Watch this"

AT T

STILL: BILL THROWS A DART.

THE

SECOND STILL: THE DART FALLS TO THE GROUND A FEW FEET AWAY.

THE

"No it wasn't like that...it was more like..."

SWT

A PAPER BIRD (ORIGAMI STYLE)

The

AT THIS MOMENT ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ FLIES IN THROUGH THE WINDOW
THE BIRD IS ANIMATED, AND AS IT FLIES INTO THEIR LINE OF VISION
THE TWO FRIENDS' HEADS TURN AS WELL TO WATCH THE BIRD AS IT
CONTINUES TO HOVER IN THE AIR IN FRONT OF THEM

Sudd

The ~~two~~ friends stare in astonishment at the odd creature.

the

Suddenly they hear a laugh behind them and turn to discover Tigerlilly
the conjurer's daughter.

STILL

STILL OF THE FRIENDS SEEING TIGERLILLY.

NEXT

NEXT STILL IS TIGERLILLY UNFOLDING THE PAPER BIRD.

"That

"This is my bird" says the Chinese girl. "It's made with magic paper
that my father has just invented."

that

"Was that your dart I saw flying across the common?" asks Rupert.

"Was

"Yes," says Tigerlilly. "It was going to pay my gas bill. ~~You write
xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ You just write on the magic paper where you
want it to go, and it will fly straight there."

"Yes

~~xxxxxxx~~ The Chinese girl offers to let Rupert try a piece for himself.

when

"I know," says Rupert, "I'll send it to find the missing frogs."

want

STILL OF RUPERT WRITING ON THE PIECE OF PAPER.

when

STILL OF RUPERT LAUNCHING DART.

"I know," says Rupert, "I'll send it to find the missing frogs."

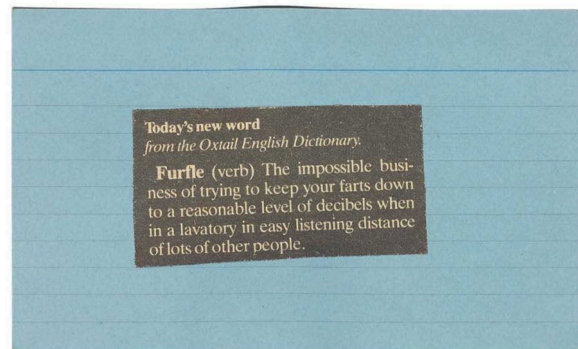
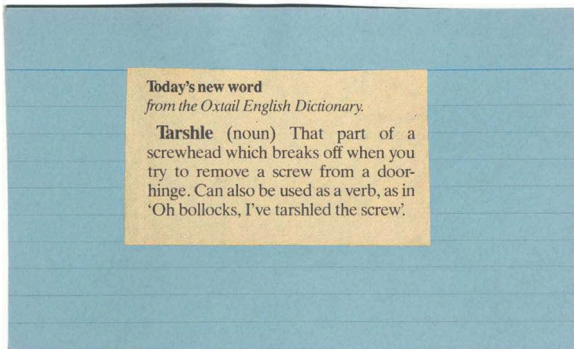
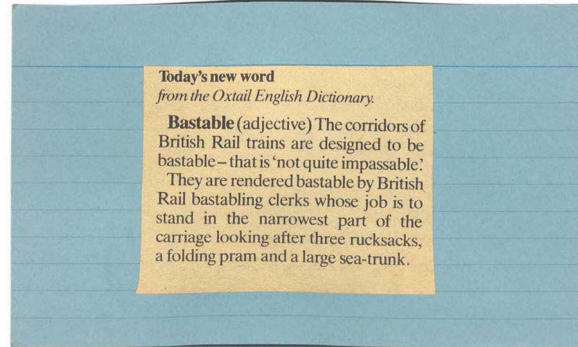
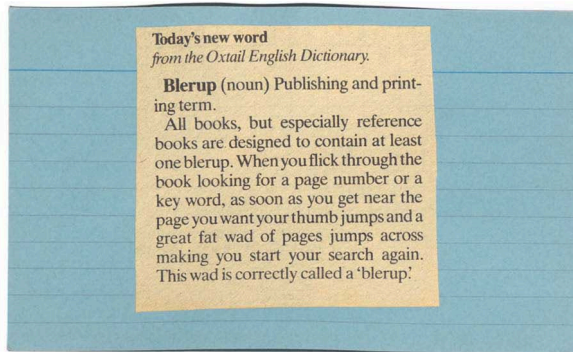
~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ CUT TO OUTSIDE THE HOUSE. THE DART STARTS TO FLY OUT...

ANIMATED THIS TIME.

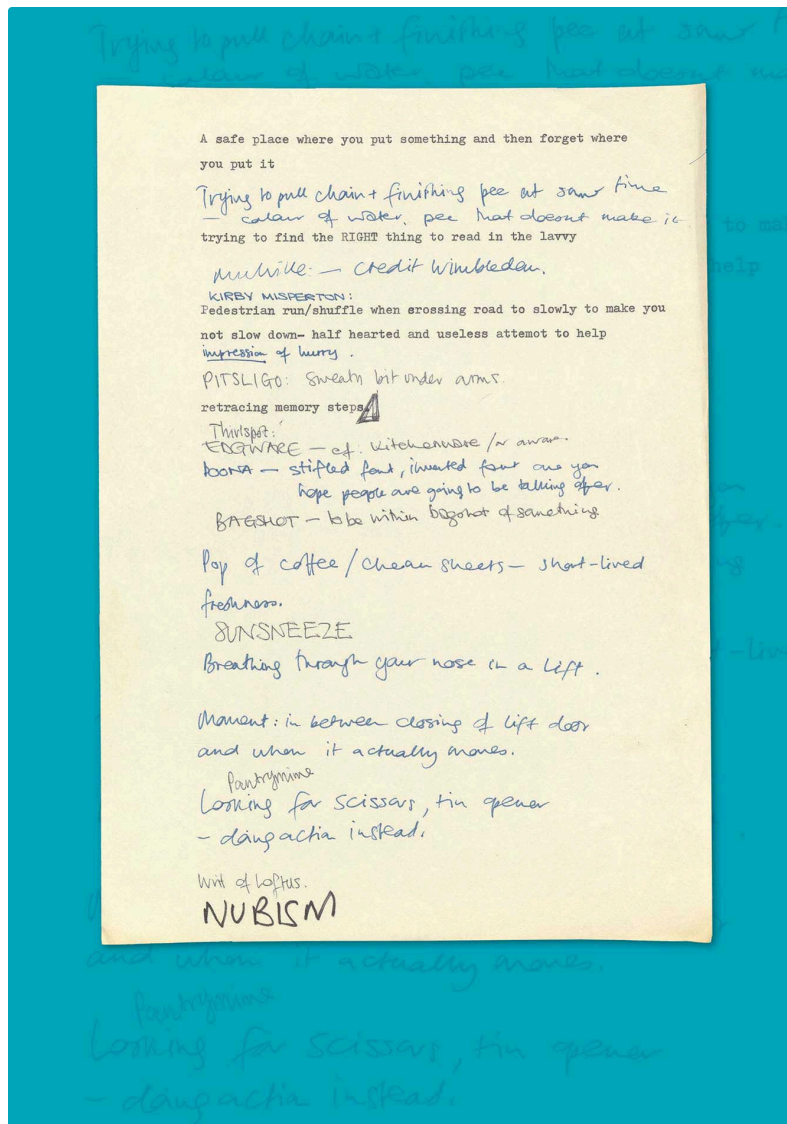
STILL OF RUPERT WRITING ON THE PIECE OF PAPER.

STILL OF RUPERT LAUNCHING DART.

SIGNS OF LIFF



While in Corfu with John Lloyd and Mary Allen in the summer of 1978, Douglas would inevitably take long breaks from writing *The Hitchhiker's Guide* to spend the time with his friends. During these breaks, they would occasionally play a game based on an English lesson Douglas had enjoyed when he was 12: the class had to give meanings or definitions to ordinary place names. John Lloyd, ever the producer, had the sense to write a few of these ideas down and then, in late 1981, used them when writing the second tie-in book to his hit comedy TV sketch show *Not the Nine O'Clock News*. In that volume (a page-a-day calendar called *NOT 1982*), these definitions, and more by a few other writers, were known as 'new words from the Oxtail English Dictionary'. *NOT 1982* sold well enough for another edition the following year, but in the meantime the publishers suggested a whole book full of the satirical definitions. Douglas and John Lloyd started by pasting existing cuttings from the *NOT* book on to index cards. These are just a few that survive in Douglas's archive.



During September and into October of 1982, John Lloyd and Douglas, holed up in singer-songwriter Donna Summer's luxury beachfront villa in California, compiled quite a lengthy list of place names and other words and their definitions, written in notebooks or typed on further index cards. An array of these notes, added to by both men, from various notebooks, index cards and computer printouts, is reproduced above and over the following pages.

Person who owns a horse which pisses
water into your whisky.

✓ Person who owns a horse which pisses
water into your whisky.

✓ To turn vegetables over so that the
bruised side is underneath.

✓ The pleasant smell of an empty biscuit
tin.

✓ A kind of poltergeist which specialises in
stealing new copies of the A-Z from your
car

✓ One who skies down a mountain in a blue
funk, and then rips down the little slope just
in front of the bar like a victorious slalom
champion.

✓ One who washes everything up except the
frying pan.

To wake up in the night and write down
a memo which the following morning you
can't remember what it means.

Something left over from a meal futilely
saved in the fridge knowing it will never be
consumed.

Bit at the end of a phone conversation
when you can't get off the line

Of banisters, to clean a filthy stiff collar with a toothbrush until it is clean enough not to be ashamed to send to the laundress.

One who is proud of a bespoke suit which actually looks like something from an Oxfam shop.

✓ The drawer your mother keeps her paper bags in.

Of writers, never to have a pen.

Intelligent person who cannot spell.

The state of a banisters flat greasy hair after wearing a wig all day.

To get a laugh with someone else's joke (to tell someone else's funny story while they are present).

Of banisters, to put bands on inside out.

The stuff that falls out of a hairbrush when you finally get round to cleaning it.

Morning after an Indian meal - clean teeth but garlic is still killing your houseplants

FANGFOSS n.

A traditional false beard of just mere skin thickness which allows Iranians and Polishian terrorists to appear with a permanent five o'clock shadow - as their religion demands.

~~ALDWINCLE~~
ALDWINCLE n.

The fake antique plastic seal attached to a pretentious gin bottle.

Sinister.

HENDRA.

~~EPHAM~~

EPHAM.

WAPPING

3990460
(213) 456 - 8841

OSWESTRY n.

(OLD SAXON)

Ancient word for a road where three times as many carts pass by in the opposite direction to the one in which you are travelling.

Also, the name of a London Underground station. A connection is unlikely. (Especially during rush hours).

PADUCAH n.

(YIDDISH)

The bloody-minded determination to continue a boring story to the finish.

FRANT n.

Measure. The legal minimum distance between two trains on the District and Circle line on the London Underground. A frant, which must be not less than 122 chains (or 8 leagues) long, is not connected in any way with the adjective "frantic" which comes to us by a completely different route (as indeed do the trains).

ABERLOUR vb.

(Of bus queues) To glare with mild anger and disappointment at a distant ^{approaching bus} knowing by its shape that it doesn't have your number on it.

20590

EVERCREECH n.

The look given by a group of polite, angry people to a rude, calm queuebarger

ADLESTROP n.

That part of a suitcase which enables your underwear to spill out all over the conveyor belt at an airport.

DORCHESTER n.

A throaty cough by someone else which obscures the amusing remark you've just made.

crucial part of the

DULEEK (n.)

Sudden realisation, as you lie in bed waiting for the alarm to go off, that it should have gone off an hour ago.

X DULUTH adj.

The smell of a taxi out of which people have just got.

X DUNBOYNE (n.)

The moment of realisation that the train you have just patiently watched pulling out of the station was the one you were meant to be on.

? DUNCRAGGON (n.)

The name of Charles Bronson's retirement cottage.

X DUNFERMLINE (n.)

The length of thread by which a silver button is separated from a blazer which has seen better days.

X DUNGENSESS (n.)

The uneasy feeling that the plastic handles of the overloaded supermarket carrier bag you are carrying are getting steadily longer.

DUNTISH (adj.)

Mentally incapacitated by a severe hangover.

This list of *Liff* entries is from a printout dating from 1983. A secretary called Mavis Kenney was employed in November 1982 to type John and Douglas's notes into an early word processor. This is but one page of many reams of folding computer paper she produced.

YARBOROUGH	noun.	The point at which two people approaching each other from opposite ends of a long corridor recognise each other but pretend they haven't noticed each other because its going to be horribly embarrassing to have to continue doing so the whole length of the passage.	CHARING	vb.	'Charing' is what people do to you when you ring up a company, and a whole string of people say 'Can I help you?' listen for ten minutes to exactly what it is you want before saying its someone else you should be talking to.
BERMONDSEY	adjective.	If you are walking down the street and someone comes towards you shouting "Halloooo!" and smiling and holding out their right hand, and then (when you've just taken your right hand out of your pocket and begun to smile) the other person sweeps past and greets someone directly <u>behind</u> you, then you will probably feel a bit 'bermondsey'.	VENABLES	noun.	Venables are a strain of prefectly healthy rodent (eg mice, rats, guinea pigs) which develop cancer the moment they enter a laboratory.
FINCHLEY	adj.	A man entertaining a girl at a restaurant which is just a bit out of his price range is said to appear 'finchley' when he tastes the little dribble of wine the waiter pours out for tasting, and tries to look sauve and sophisticated when he hasn't the faintest idea whether the wine is any good or not.	TRING	noun.	The little shuddery feeling a girl gets when a man puts a hand on her newly shaved leg.
SNAPE	noun.	(RARE) There are believed to be no more than eight snapes in the whole of the British Isles. This increasingly rare form of municipal tunnel, which, it is believed, may become extinct by the early 1980's, is one in which no-one has played over the concrete during the preceding night.	SCARBOROUGH	noun.	A speechless warning glare directed at someone who just has, or is just about to, embark on a whole series of frintons, fulbourn-s or wigans.
			FRINTON	noun.	The expression on your face when you've just said that someone's a cunt, and then realise they're standing right next to you.

The Meaning of Liff was published in late 1983 (simultaneously by Pan Books and Faber & Faber) in a small pocket-sized volume with an orange sticker on the front proudly asserting 'This book will change your life' (see [page 197](#)). What Douglas and John admired about the design was that it didn't say anywhere on the front that it was meant to be funny. Douglas's archive contains quite a few rejected draft ideas that didn't make the original book and its later update *The Deeper Meaning of Liff* (1990). A few of those rejected entries are arranged above and on the opposite page.

Zebrarianism, the mystic philosophy which teaches that this is the one true path. Unlike other religions it holds that the road is both long and winding and straight and narrow depending where you are, but in any case it should be contemplated. In this it differs from Moonieism, which teaches that where the road is narrowest it is easier to stop innocent passers by and bore them with your life story, or from the Hare Krishna Sect which believes that to pass down the road is hard, and should be made harder by hopping up and down it making a lot of noise in an orange bedspread in the company of other adepts.

UTTOXETER

noun.

A small but immensely complex mechanical device which is essentially the "brain" of a modern coffee machine. The uttoxeter enables the machine to take its own decisions without the need for human intervention.

On receiving the coin, and the command "coffee", the uttoxeter decides which of the following courses of action to take; It may (a) shoot the plastic beaker down upside down and pour coffee all over the bottom of it (b) shoot the plastic beaker straight out of the hatch and onto the floor and pour coffee down the grating (c) shoot the plastic beaker down the right way up and then fill it with cold oxtail soup (d) shoot the plastic beaker down and do nothing at all, with (optionally) (e) wait till you put your hand inside to investigate then pour coffee all over it (f) gurgle a bit and then take the rest of the afternoon off.

MIDWICH

noun.

This is the moment of false recognition in a long corridor encounter. Though both protagonists are perfectly well aware that the other person is approaching, and they know that they know, they have to pretend the opposite. They now look up, smile glassily with mouths gaping, and as if having seen each other for the first time gasp out "HaaaalllooB!" as if to say "Good GRIEF! YOU...HERE!! Well I never! Ooh! Stap me hearties etc"

RISBOROUGH

noun.

A hateful look directed out of the back of your neck.

Risboroughs are often employed when you have just, only just, by pushing and shoving managed to be the last person to squeeze into a rush-hour compartment so closely that you have to bend your head when the doors start closing. You then feel part of the club, and when the train stops at the next station and there are more people waiting, you zap them with a powerful risborough and say between gritted teeth "If anyone else gets on this train...."

CLOPTON

noun.

An insane housewife.

During any consumer shortage (bread, sugar etc) hundreds of cloptons can be seen queuing outside the shop which sells whatever it is there isn't any of, in the hour before dawn.

The remarkable thing about cloptons is that they will readily starve their family of food, water and clothing in order to buy something which there is a shortage of even if it is a shortage of long-handled, quill-bristle Peruvian funt-brushes and they've already got a wardrobe stuffed with them.

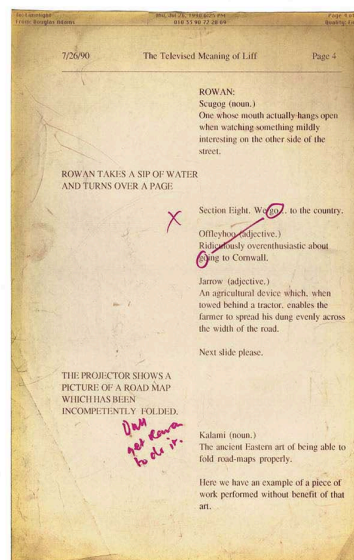
When in 1973 it was announced by the Kenyan Government that there were hardly any white rhinos left in Africa, a queue of more than two thousand cloptons besieged the London offices of the World Wildlife Fund, who were only able to avert a riot by announcing that white rhinos were now completely extinct.

LUBBOCK

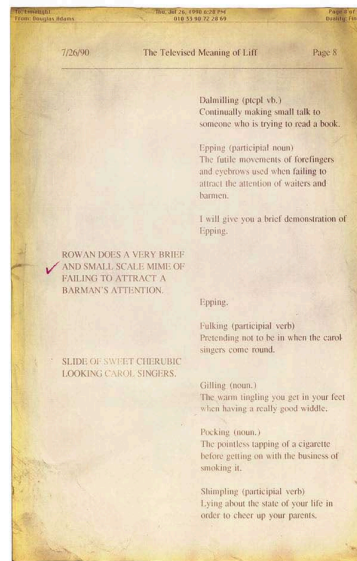
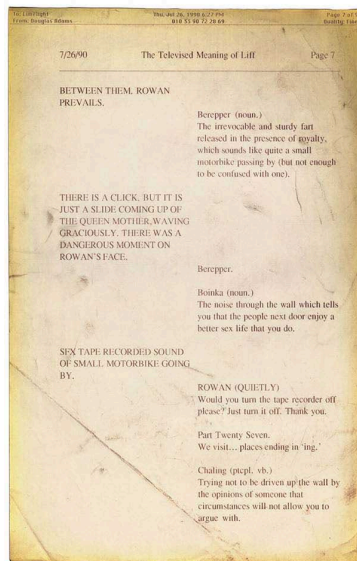
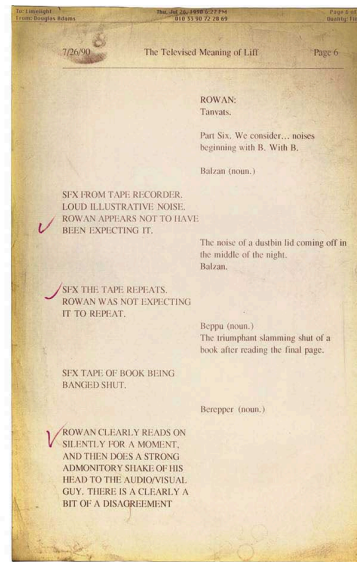
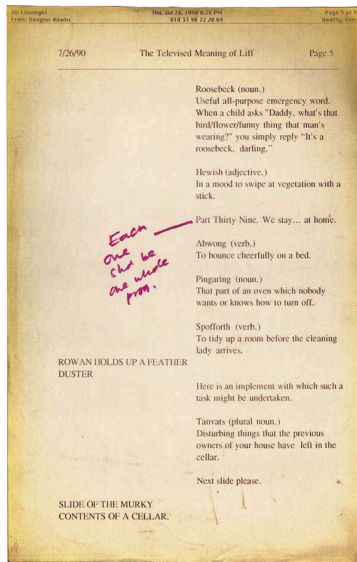
noun.

A large mouthful which makes it impossible to hear what the speaker is saying.

Lubbocks are in common use by British Rail, the major lubbock-importers in this country. Every station tannoy-announcer is supplied with a daily stock of lubbocks (usually made of surgical lint or wads of corrugated cardboard), enabling them to easily make such remarks as "Will ALL passengers harwarble burdle aquam amorditraber curgy afar: eeg in one minutes time please."

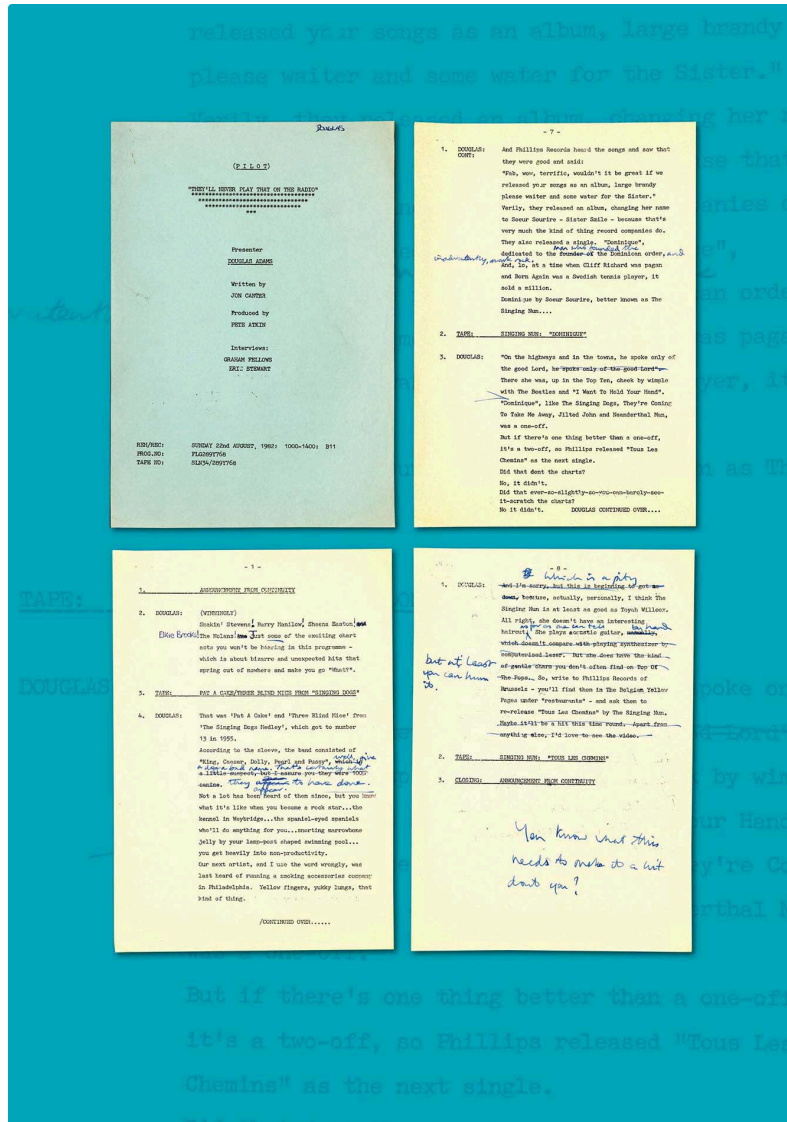


In 1990, Douglas and John Lloyd worked up a short sample script for a potential TV pilot based on *The Meaning of Liff* and its sequel *The Deeper Meaning of Liff*. Lloyd had been producing TV for over a decade with actor Rowan Atkinson, first with *Not the Nine O'Clock News* and then the historical sitcom *Blackadder*, so Atkinson was a natural choice as presenter.



This fax to Limelight Productions (rather faded in real life, but brought back to readability here) sets out the intention. Sadly, the programme was never made, but for anyone who knows Rowan Atkinson's work, it's easy to imagine the actor rolling the vowels. John Lloyd has himself more recently performed extracts to great audience acclaim at various Douglas-related events.

UNUSUAL OFFERS



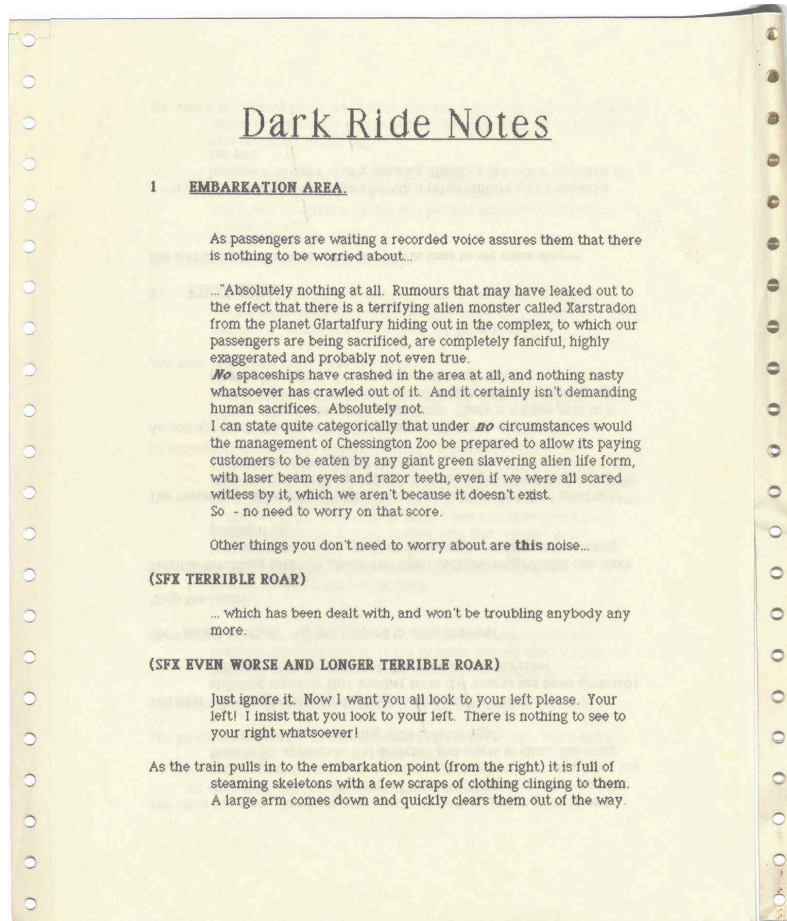
Douglas was asked to present a radio pilot programme of novelty records and one-hit wonders with a script by his former flatmate, comedy writer Jon Canter. This short draft of *They'll Never Play that on the Radio*, with Douglas's own annotations, is in his archive. Pete Atkin, director at BBC Light Entertainment, made the recording and was pleased with it. He then submitted it to the department's Direction Group, who, somewhat to Atkins' bafflement, decided it was too unusual for Radio 4 – it never aired.

I think that ~~the~~ Jon
has done a very good job
on this script

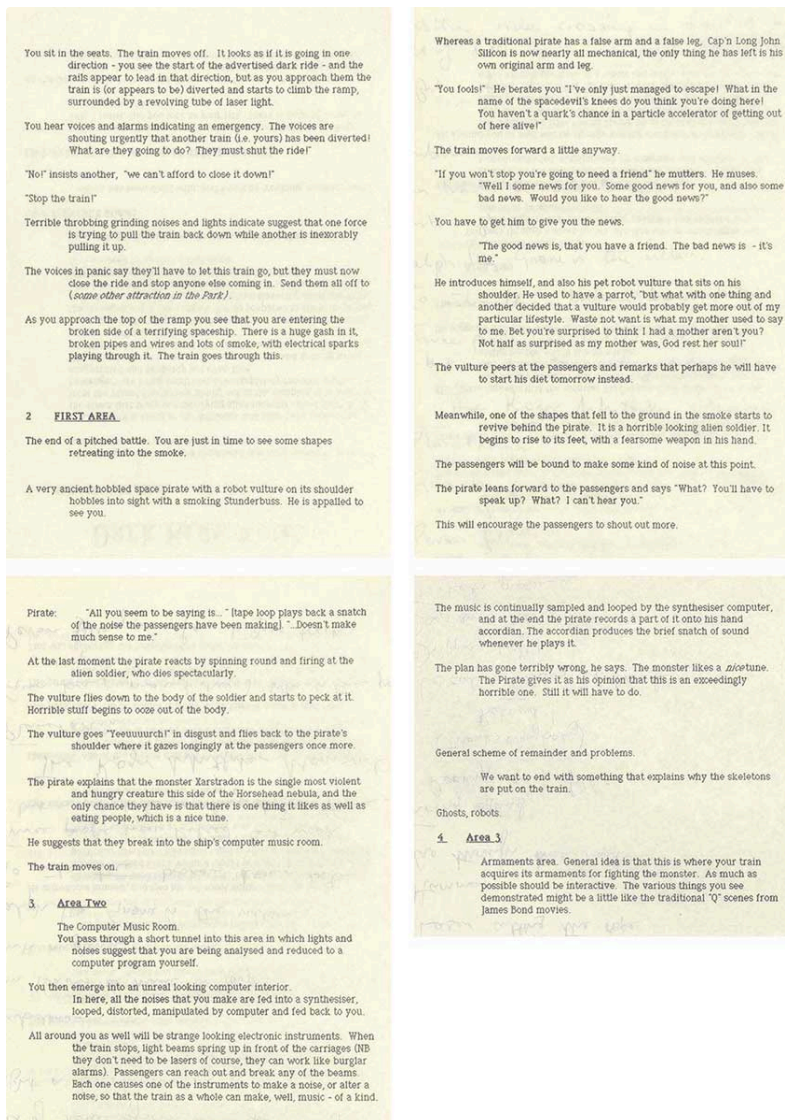
The only reason I'm writing
this, though, is just to
try out the nib on this
pen and see what it feels
like. I'm becoming increasingly
dyslexic I think. Every word
I write involves going back
and filling in the missing
letters

This note is among the archive material for *They'll Never Play that on the Radio* (opposite) – Douglas trying out a new nib and musing on his need to go back and fill in missing letters!

RIDING HIGH

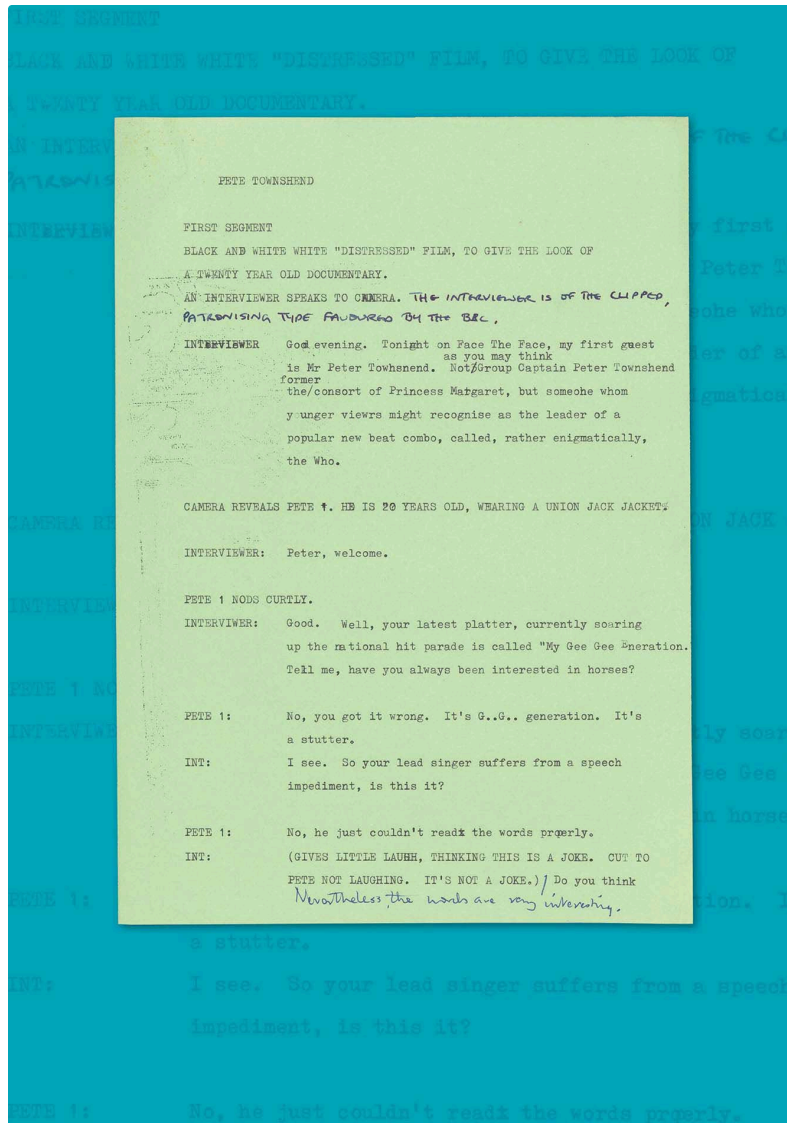


In one of Douglas's more unusual collaborations, he met with Ian Hanson, former sculptor, then Head of Studios at the Tussaud's Group. Famous primarily for its waxworks, Madame Tussaud's was developing a new space-themed Dark Ride at their Chessington World of Adventures theme park in Surrey, UK. However, the offer of a huge advance for his Dirk Gently novels meant that after devising the first notes (above and opposite), Douglas pulled out. Nonetheless, he gave the company permission to use anything he'd already talked about. Apparently, Douglas had suggested getting the cast of hit comedy *The Young Ones* involved, but nothing came of this.

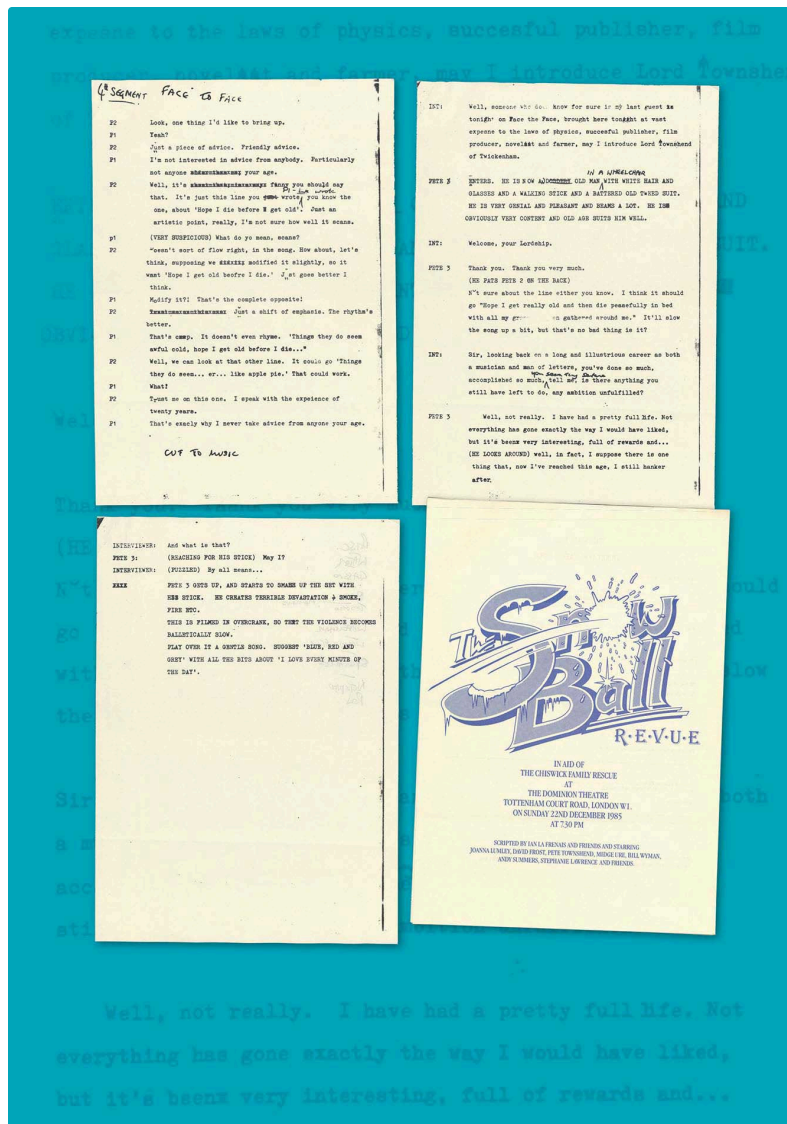


A recent discovery of original soundtracks by The British Theme Park Archive revealed that some of Douglas's ideas on these few pages of script made it to fruition in the ride known as 'The Fifth Dimension'. Not only that, but *Hitchhiker's Guide* veteran voice artist David Tate ('Hi there, this is Eddie, your shipboard computer') played the newsreader-style announcer on video as you entered the ride. Sadly, the ride was grossly simplified and re-vamped after just six months, and Douglas's witty script was given the chop.

CHARITY EVENTS



In the summer of 1985, Douglas was asked to contribute to a charity event, The Snow Ball Revue, for that Christmas (this was also the year of Live Aid). He drafted a linked series of sketches for Pete Townshend (of rock band The Who) that would be filmed and screened between live performances. Pete's wife, Karen Townshend, chaired the organizing committee, and Lynne Franks (the inspiration for Edina 'Eddie' Monsoon in *Absolutely Fabulous*) handled the PR. The impressive cast list included David Frost, Joanna Lumley, Midge Ure, Bill Wyman, Gary Kemp, Mike Batt, Rik Mayall, Ian Dury, Rowan Atkinson, Terry Jones, Michael Palin and Steven Berkoff. Townshend played as part of his Deep End Band, with Pink Floyd's Dave Gilmour and others.



Douglas's film scripts demanded Townshend play himself aged 20, in his mid-40s and in old age, riffing on his infamous 'Hope I die before I get old' lyric. The middle-aged Pete (page 2 in the script) tries to give advice to the brash young Pete ([page 1](#)), who famously smashed up his guitar and amps on stage. The future elder statesman Townshend, though genial, still harbours fantasies of trashing the place. There's no known existing filmed record of these interludes, but luckily some drafts (reproduced opposite and above) survive.

On the Desktop

Reconstruction of plot as explained to Joe.
They arrive on Magrathea to discover that ~~it is~~ ~~you~~ the Answer is due.

16 Jan 84.

Finished the Scene in Damogran and the Heart of Gold Imp Drive speech.
KWing the wake up scene into the end of Damogran, which means that Damogran will be move up to date than MVI-UNF

17 Jan 84. DOUGLAS

Getting rid of the Vogan bit for the while! Dumping it into Bin 3.
Description of Vogan cabin in Bin 2

Orb's travel plans can be peppered throughout the script.
Planetarium section in Bin 3

It's going to be hard to ~~be~~ ~~not~~ ~~going~~ to learn to love that Boat, Jupiter.

Where does the Babel fish go, then?

Babel fish section KIV in Babel.

Im KWing all of MVI-UNF from the original first sight of HQ bridge ("Who are they trillion") to the end of the Deep Thought section into a new file which will continue directly from the end of Damogran.
This is DANA

MVI-UNF up to the point where DAMOGRAN would take over (XXX) is 34 pages long.

As a fan and fore-thinker of technology, it's not surprising that Douglas was keen to experiment with word processing in the early days of home computing. His forays are documented in his notebook from early 1984, when he was still working on the first (ultimately abortive) *Hitchhiker's Guide* movie script for Columbia. The phrase 'KW-ing' appears, which probably hints at use of word-processing software WordStar on an IBM machine. Douglas clearly wasn't confident in the technology yet, jotting down handwritten notes as to where in the machine's memory he's storing certain blocks of his precious text. ('Joe' in the notes is most likely Joe Medjuck, who was working for producer Ivan Reitman.)

Reconstruction of plot as explained to Joe.
They arrive on Magrathea to discover that the Answer is due.

16 Jan 84

Finished the scene on Damogran used the Heart of Gold Imp Drive speech.

KW-ing the wake up scene onto the end of Damogran, which means that Damogran will be more up to date than MV1-UNF.

17 Jan 84

Getting rid of the Vogon bit for the while, dumping it into BIN.

Description of Vogon cabin in BIN2

Ford's travel plans can be peppered throughout the script.

Planetarium section in BIN 3.

It's going to be hard to learn to love that robot, Zaphod.

Where does the Babel Fish go, then?

Babel Fish section KW in Babel.

I'm KW-ing all of MV1-UNF from the original first sight of HOG bridge ("Who are they Trillian?") to the end of the Deep Thought section into a new file which will continue directly from the end of Damogran.

This is DAM 2

MV1-UNF up to the point where DAMOGRAM would take over (xxx) is 34 pages long.

Feb 22nd

Have been fiddling with comms between TRS-80 100 and Rainbow.

The TRM file on K user 3 and K user 12 (identical) works with the pair, though it maybe that there is problem with line feeds coming into the Rainbow.

It works perfectly well transferring stuff To the TANDY.

For some mysterious reason, when transferring stuff to the TANDY with MITE it sends about 5 x-offs ~~to~~ and then gives up.

No idea why.

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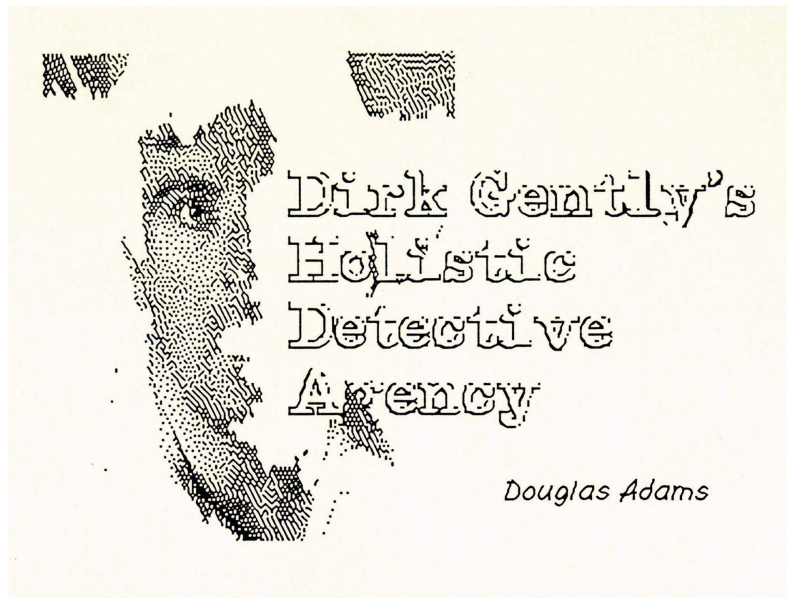


In an article for *MacUser* magazine in December 1987, Douglas recalled his first meeting with a Macintosh computer, beginning a continuing fascination with all things Apple. He wrote that what he 'fell in love with was not the machine itself, which was ridiculously slow and underpowered, but a romantic idea of the machine. And that romantic idea had to sustain me through the realities of actually working on the 128K Mac, then the 512K Mac and even (let's be honest, now that the MacII is here) on the MacPlus'. He persevered through all those iterations, though, and ultimately became an advocate for the brand, invited to speak at conferences about Apple itself. It's now a matter of legend that Douglas was the first to buy a Mac in the UK (and his friend, the actor, comedian, writer and director Stephen Fry, the second). This is an image of one of Douglas's AppleMacs, now housed in the Cambridge Computer Museum, UK.



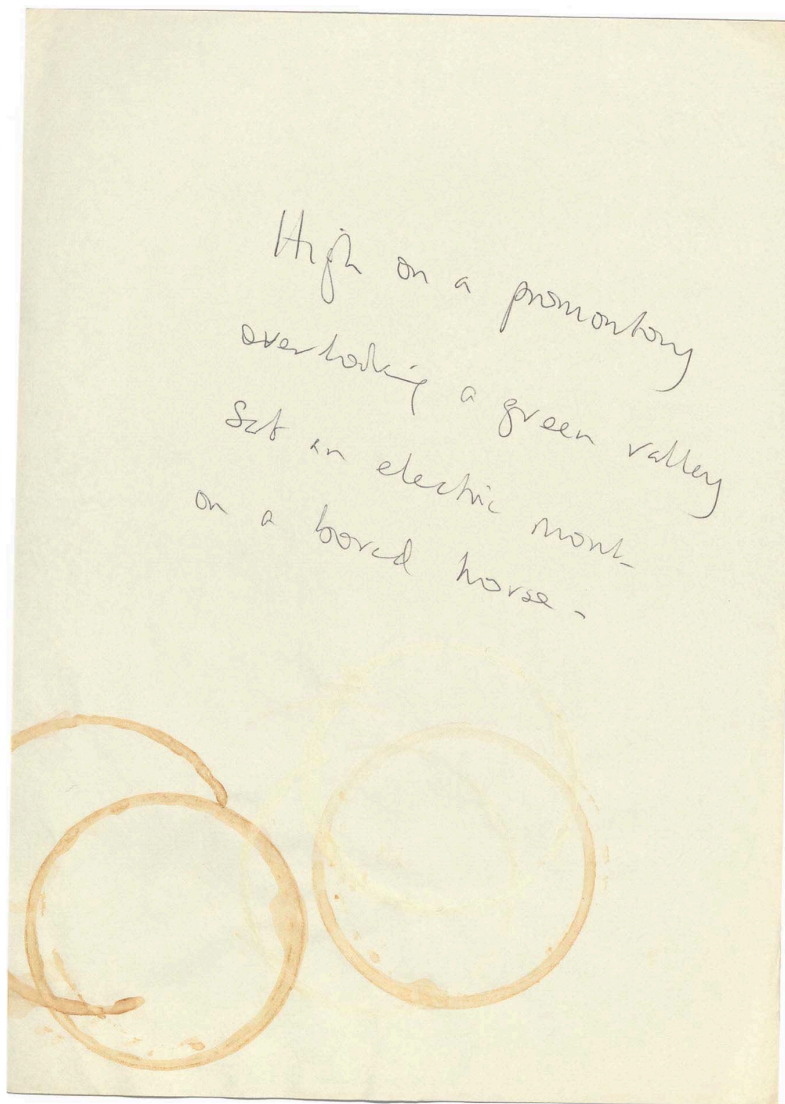
TEN

Holistic Detective



In November 1985, Douglas's agent, Ed Victor, landed Douglas a huge advance and a two-book deal that would become Dirk Gently and his holistic detective agency. It took Douglas a while to identify how best to describe his new books, but his papers give insight into the evolution of the character and stories.

EARLY NOTIONS



The mug-stained note above is where *Dirk Gently* began – a random, intriguing line jotted down on a piece of paper that Douglas would rediscover and further ponder. The line was originally intended for a continuation of the *Hitchhiker's Guide* storyline (below).

The second *Dirk Gently* book was *The Long Dark Tea-Time of the Soul* (1988), which concerned itself with the fate of the Norse gods. Douglas had played with this notion in the early 1970s, in a 'mockumentary' script about Zeus (opposite, bottom).

THE HITCH HIKER'S GUIDE TO THE GALAXY SHORT STORY.

High on a rocky promontory sat an electric monk on a bored house. The monk was an electric one because beleiving anything at allthese days is so difficult that it's easier to get a machine to do it for you, and the horse was bored becasue ~~it had had nothing to do all day other than sit there overlooking a valley while this~~ cowled machine sat him motionlessly believing things that were palpably untrue.

It
nothing was happening. ~~He, the horse,~~ had been standing there all day while this cowled machine had sat on top of ^{so} ~~him~~ motionlessly believing things that were palpably untrue, even to a horse.

C.V. Zeus.

Of course, one can't help feeling bitter at times, just at times though, I mean life still has its pleasures - a few perks, I did a commercial for a brand of cooking oil last month - it's easy to scoff and say I'm just a has been, and the thing is, I have moved over, I've let others move up into my place but it still creates problems when you're immortal

[CAPTION ZEUS, KING OF THE OLYMPIAN GODS]

VO - Tonight on Documentary - we look at the Immortals, and we ask, Where are they and what are they doing now?

Cut to WAS hilly countryside - blustery day. Small tent in the distance.

Fruit - drink.

Archaeologist has run off with my money.

Inflation.

Equity

GETTING STARTED

This time there would be no witnesses.

There was instead just a rumble of thunder, a buffet of wind, and the onset of that interminable light drizzle from the north east by which so many of the world's most momentous events seem to be accompanied.

This time there would be no witnesses.

This time there was just the dead earth, a rumble of thunder, and the onset of that interminable light drizzle from the north east by which so many of the world's most momentous events seem to be accompanied.

This time there would be no witnesses.

This time there was just the stormy darkness of the night, and away in the distance the looming blackness of the tower.

This time there would be no witnesses.

This time there was just the darkness of the night, and the tower. The night was hot and full of rain, the tower a short and blackened stump supported by squat ungainly buttresses. Each slash of rain was made momentarily particular by the dim light that flickered redly from deep in the structure's interior. The shadows of its heavy buttresses veered wildly in the dying light.

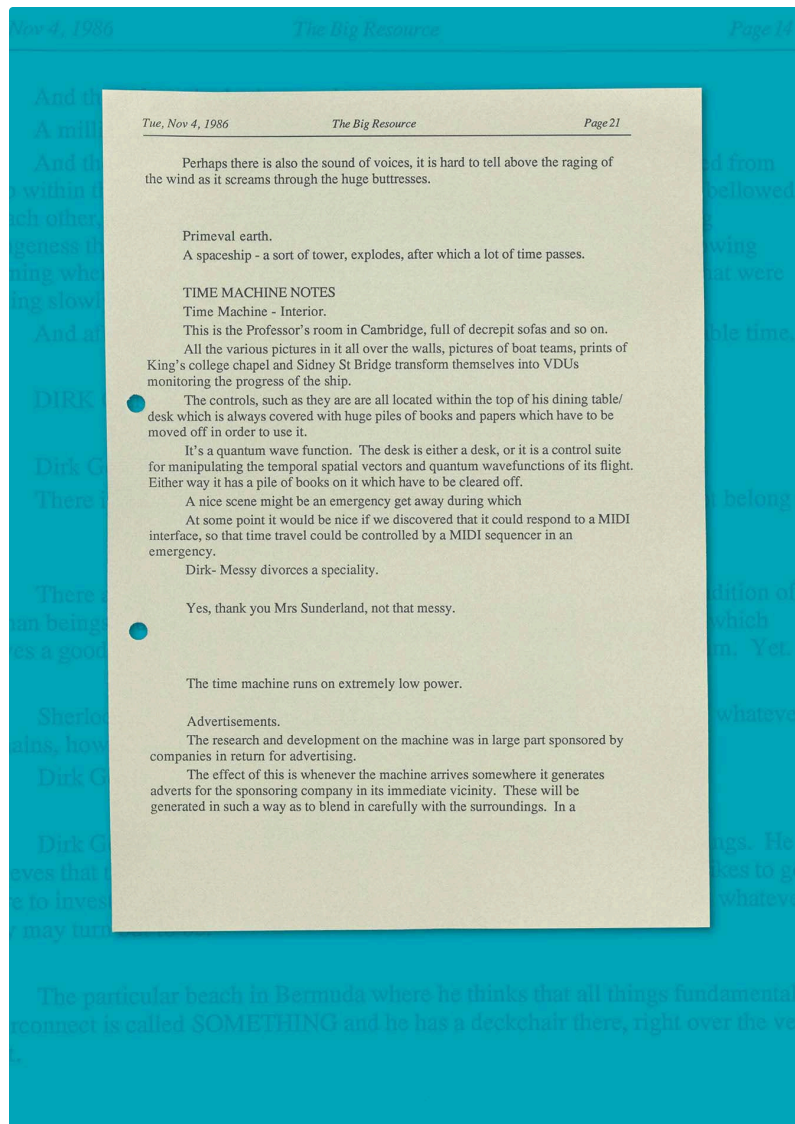
This time there would be no witnesses.

The evening sky settled like lead on the land. The grey light of the moon was blotchy with storm clouds, hot and heavy with rain. There is a structure standing here, a sort of tower. It stands there no longer, of course, but its shadow remains, immensely long and immensely dark. At first the tower seemed more insubstantial in the fading gloom, but soon the only light that still played on it was the dim red flicker from within it, and its own shadows came out to play. the shadows of its great buttresses veered wildly and the structure assumed monstrous proportions that danced, loomed and fled, loomed and fled again, leaping into the night. No witnesses.

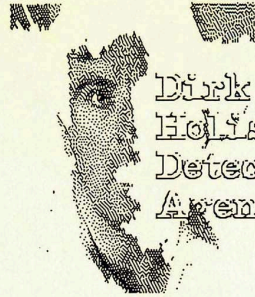
This time there would be no witnesses.

This time there was just the darkness of the night, and the tower. The night was hot and full of rain. It beat about the tower's blackened stump, and each slash was made momentarily particular by the dim red light that flickered from deep in its interior. The shadows of its heavy buttresses veered wildly in the dying light. No witnesses.

No figures floundering desperately through the stinking mud. Silence, and the thunder of the rain.



Getting under way was a problem for Douglas. In the past he'd had a habit of writing or typing the same bit over and over again, honing and shaping the flow of the words, without advancing very much further. Once he began working on a computer, the same habit persisted, even though word processing meant that it was no longer necessary. In his archives are over a dozen hard copies of these variants of the first page for *Dirk Gently*. Maybe he just liked to print out each version, just because he could. Or, perhaps he was trying to solve the conundrum of his complex plot by reinventing it over and over again.



Dirk Gently's
Holistic
Detective
Agency

Douglas Adams

Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency /Douglas Adams

WHAT IT IS:

A ghost/horror/detective/time travel/romantic comedy epic.

VITALLY IMPORTANT BACKGROUND STUFF:

The story begins many many millions of years ago, before the first spark of life ever appeared on this planet. Ten minutes before, to be precise.

The last remnants of an embattled and evil race, the Stragluxans, have landed on a barren young planet, to build a vast refuge for themselves. Their ship is crippled. They take a finely calculated risk in trying to restart the ship's engines.

Against huge probability the risk fails.

The engines explode.

The ship and its crew are blown into gamma rays, and send a pulse of energy into the rich primeval slime, triggering the beginning of Life on Earth.

MEANWHILE...

A large number of millions of years go by.

The world we know and recognise emerges.

An odd world, some would say, a world that we, its inhabitants, have continually peopled with imaginary Gods and Devils, to explain the inexplicable.

These annotated notes (above, below and overleaf) are drafts for the book's press release, attempting to explain the genre, plot and characters.

And there seems to be an awful lot that is inexplicable.
Amongst the things that we most constantly try to explain to ourselves
are death, guilt, evil, a persistent sense of loss and headaches.

NOW:

Dirk Gently is, as he is fond of telling his friends, (of whom he has many, some of which he has kept for as long as a week), a Professional Charlatan. He makes a living by having silly ideas and then finding people stupid enough to believe them.

His current one is Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency.

As a result of a popular science book he read recently he has decided to try and apply the principles of Quantum Mechanics to the finding of lost pussy cats.

His theory is that they are not lost, but that their wave form has temporarily collapsed and must be restored.

This is, of course, complete tosh.
At least, it might as well be for all the cats he finds.

Instead, in the course of the story he stumbles unwittingly on a force that has powerfully interfered with and haunted life throughout human history, which is the collapsed quantum wave form of the very strong probability that in primeval times the Straglaxan ship's engines did not explode.

Like all waves interfering with other waves, it has peaks and troughs, times when it is very powerful, times when it is very weak.

When it is powerful it causes a huge increase in violence, irrationality, and paranormal activity as our world passes into the grip of the Straglaxan ghosts.

At its most dangerous, it takes possession of people, makes them the puppets of an evil race, lost in time.

Matthew Winkworth is a man with a problem, which he makes the great mistake of confiding to Dirk Gently.

His problem is that he has left a message on somebody's telephone answering machine about which he is now extremely embarrassed. It was just asking Eve Bairstow out for dinner, but he made a complete mess of talking to her machine and doesn't want to appear a complete fool at this early stage of what he hopes will be their relationship.

What to do?

Gently proposes a very simple answer - break into the house, wipe the tape.

probability

Richard Macdull?

*with
The
prof*

*probability
have a
a way of retrieving
the
situation?*

It's worth noting here the many wonderful actors who have played Dirk in various adaptations over the years. Douglas's friend and occasional collaborator Michael Bywater appeared in scenes for a *South Bank Show* documentary in 1992; comedian Harry Enfield was a lugubrious Dirk Gently on BBC Radio in 2007 and actor Stephen Mangan played a more sparky Dirk on BBC TV in four episodes, beginning in 2010. The longest-running version to date starred Samuel Barnett as Dirk (with Elijah Wood as his sidekick 'Todd') for two series on BBC America, in 2016/17.

SOME CHARACTERS:

Dirk Gently:

There is a long tradition of great detectives, and Dirk Gently does not belong to it.

There are those who say that he hardly belongs to the most minor tradition of human beings, but the only people who say that are people who know him, which leaves a good 3.9 billion people who have no particular reason to loathe him. Yet.

A typical Dirk Gently bill:

To:

Finding cat (deceased) - £50

Detecting and triangulating vectors of interconnectedness of all things - £150

Tracing same to beach on Bahamas, fare and accomodation - £1500

Struggling on in face of draining scepticism from client, drinks - £327.50

Dirk Gently's Manservant:

- believed by Dirk Gently to be the smallest, ugliest man who ever lived, and often used by his employer to break the ice at sèances. He is cantakerous, wilful, goes completely insane at weekends for relaxation, and usually refers to himself as "Mr Gently's Creature". He is also known as "The Nameless Horror", or "Nameless" for short.

Joyce Stickley:

Dirk Gently's lank and ratlike girlfriend.

Matthew Winkworth:

A computer software designer who does not deserve the things that happen to him in this book.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge:

Well known Romantic poet, drug abuser and unwitting stumbler upon sensitive architectural plans.

The Regius Professor of Chronology at St Cedd's College, Cambridge, or "Reg" for short.

A kindly old duffer, widely thought to have been brilliant in his day, though no one's quite certain as to when exactly his day was. A minor character to begin with who begins to assume greater importance as more facts come to light about him. For instance, Matthew Winkworth discovers that he appears to have been living in the same set of rooms in College for over three hundred years. The nature of Cambridge academic society is such that no one has seen fit to call attention to this.

"Reg" is in fact a retired time traveller.

It is through his intervention that our heroes are eventually enabled to fight a battle to the death in the primeval swamps of Earth...



Hello,

You have reached the offices of Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency. Or rather, you have reached an advertisement for it. Or at least, an advertisement for the book of the same name. If you'd like to leave a message after the beep, you can't. There isn't going to be one.

This is Douglas Adams speaking, and Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency is my new book.

When I wrote the Hitch Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy books I was only mucking about really, seeing if I could get the typewriter to work. Well, it did, all except for the letter "B" as anyone who reads them carefully will quickly realise.

This time I decided to do the job properly. What the world needed, I could see was a thumping good Ghost Horror Detective Whodunit Time Travel Romantic Musical Comedy epic with a decent cookery supplement at the back. Well, it's not going to get it, I'm afraid, because I'm a lousy cook. But I think I've managed to cram the rest in.

Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency. Published by Heinemann on June 15th. I can't remember what price it is off hand, but it's a keen one. Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency. The first ever fully realised Ghost Horror Detective Whodunit Time Travel Romantic Musical Comedy Epic. Certainly the first one ever to begin with the word 'this.' Read it, and find out why.

In a script for an answer phone message to plug the book upon release, Douglas came up with a neat explanation for his new genre of novel (above, inset).

DIRK GENTLY'S HOLISTIC DETECTIVE AGENCY

Dear Bookseller,

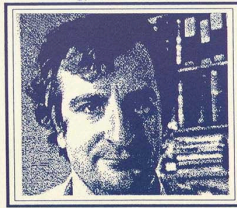
When I wrote *The Hitch-Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy* books I was only mucking about really, seeing if I could get the typewriter to work. Well, it did, all except for the letter "B", as anyone who reads them carefully will quickly realise.

Well, this time I decided it was time to really get down to it, roll my sleeves up, and do the job properly. What the world needed, I could see quite clearly, was a thumping good Detective – Ghost – Horror – Whodunit – Time-Travel – Romantic – Musical – Comedy Epic with a decent cookery supplement at the back. Well, it's not going to get it, I'm afraid, because I'm a lousy cook and always manage to burn the spinach, but I think I've managed to cram the rest in.

I would like your help in this. In the past I've seen *The Hitch-Hiker's Guide to The Galaxy* displayed under "Travel" and *The Restaurant at the End of the Universe* featured next to Egon Ronay and the Good Food Guide, and this is a trend I would like to encourage. There is no section of a bookshop in which will Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency will not happily sit, and from which it will not, I hope disappear pretty smartly too. Except for the cookery section. Please don't put it there, it will only confuse people. Wait for my next book. My publishers are begging me not to call it me *Dirk Gently Makes the Perfect Spinach Soufflé*, but they're going to have to buy me a lot of lunches if they want to change my mind.

I've really enjoyed writing this book, more than any since my first one. I hope you enjoy selling it. Good luck with it.

Douglas Adams



Portrait of an author who just finished his new book
at 4.00 o'clock this morning.

A 'Detective – Ghost – Horror – Whodunit – Time-Travel – Romantic – Musical – Comedy' was how Douglas described the book – here in a letter to retailers, as well as to every newspaper or magazine reporter, TV host and reviewer ever afterwards.

KUBLA KHAN



The alternative timeline in the *Dirk Gently* story gave Douglas the opportunity to flex his literary muscles and create new verses for Coleridge's famous poem 'Kubla Khan'. Douglas's section begins halfway down the third page, from 'And Kubla sternly gazed...' to the end. It's worth noting Douglas's acknowledgement at the end (in the '-ish' and the dates) that the authorship wasn't entirely authentic!

NOTES FOR *THE SALMON OF DOUBT*

the Country Fresh Farmhouse Churn butter which comes in tiny hermetically sealed vacuum-formed ~~plastic~~ packs

• It's amazing how much paper you can cover if you have a certain facility with words and no great impulse to make any of them mean anything.

• At the very beginning of the book we follow the course of a meteorite that is travelling through the solar system towards the planet Earth. We may update it from time to time during the course of the book.

Then, towards the end of the book Dirk will be in a desperate situation, confronting a deadly adversary, and at the critical moment the meteorite will strike the enemy down. This will outrage and deeply upset Dirk, because he will be convinced that he was capable of winning through using only his wits. This might be doubtful, which is what makes him particularly angry. He bitterly resents the fact that.

I'm beginning to get used to the place in a resigned sort of a way, but I was pretty appalled when I first got here. If I tell you that even the palm trees on the beach have Muzak pumped out of them you'll probably be able to fill in the rest of the picture from your own imagination, but in case you can't, here are a few more details.

The place is full of what I assume are typists from whatever the Australian equivalent of Bromley is. Every evening there are theme parties during which I sit in my room and read or watch tv in order to avoid seeing lots of fat drunken Australian cavorting around the place

in grass skirts or cowboy hats or whatever the theme of the evening is. Yesterday I spent lunchtime sitting getting slowly sozzled on tequila sunrises and listening to the conversation at the table next to me which for three quarters of an hour was exclusively concerned with stories about road accidents involving heavy goods vehicles. Most of the rest of yesterday I spent like this – I woke up at about eight, but didn't summon up the energy to get up till about 1 o'clock. This represented a good five hours of solid trying and continual failure. I hadn't realised quite how tired I was after the tour until faced with the prospect of being able to stay in bed as long as I wanted to. I then had the tequila sunrises and then went and sat purposefully by the pool. By about 7.00pm I realised that the time for swimming had effectively passed and retired exhausted to my room and spent the evening listening to maddened drunk Australians rampaging through the night in grass skirts and watching what I eventually deduced must have been one of the Mad Max films on tv. That too featured a lot of road accidents, at least one of which involved a heavy goods vehicle.

Scuba diving.

At least they don't pump the muzak under the water and none of the fish attempt to tell you about road accidents, they merely bite your leg off.

I can hardly bear to describe what has just happened. I am sitting by the pool. A walking band of happy people playing accordians and maraccas has walked past playing happy jolly having-fun-type music. With them were lots of little girls wearing Tahitian flowered skirts with flowers in their hair. And behind them were four bronzed Australians wearing Hawaiian print shirts, shorts and white socks, smiling and carrying two dead pigs on poles.

The setting here is really very beautiful which is why I particularly hate all those things which the brochure describes as "superb" or "sophisticated" and "international", i.e. the muzak and the talent contests and all the other trappings of that international, superb and sophisticated dump, Butlins.

I was talking to an Australian couple on the boat. My general line of introduction is "Hello, my name is Douglas, don't you hate the muzak?" This couple didn't as a matter of fact. They thought it was very nice and international and sophisticated. They lived on a sheep farm some 850 miles west of Brisbane where all they ever heard, they said, was nothing. I said that must be very nice and they said that it got rather boring after a while, and a little light muzak was balm to them. They refused to go along with my assertion that it was like having spam stuffed in your ears all day and after a while the conversation petered out.

It is now 6.20pm and already quite a lot of big beefy australians are resolutely plodding around in their Hawaiian grass skirts, so I'm starting to tuck into some Tequila sunrises to help myself cope with it all.

A rather callow Australian youth has just walked past wearing a Hawaiian print shirt, grass skirt, shark's tooth necklace and two cups of tea. I can only imagine that he feels very embarrassed to look as stupid as that, or that his brain is dead. What is the matter with the world?

Over the following pages, concluding this collection of artefacts on *Dirk Gently* from the archive, are some highlights from the notes for Douglas's third, unfinished *Dirk Gently* novel, which was published posthumously in 2002.

He appeared to live in another world, which would have been good news for all concerned had it been true, but unfortunately his body had taken up solid, or at least flabby, residence in this one. He was a record company executive, a job that suited him terribly well because it gave a tremendous vantage point from which to affect to despise everything, including the record company which paid him to be a vile toady – redundant payment, since he would have done it for free since he had been doing it for free all his life. It was part of his affectation not to know what bands his record company currently had signed, what records they had released, what they sounded like, or even what they looked like. If asked, he would instead talk in a whiney drawl about Baudelaire about whom he also knew nothing.

•

The cathedral.

The towers throng with cows and hippos. One of the gargoyles at a low level by the entrance is a gargoyle beneath which is a bearded saint driving a sword into its belly in a reverend manner.

People built this.

Guillaume, le maître charpentier, couvreur, mason, sculptor, etc.

Inteconnectedness with the past. By being ignorant of the past we cut ourselves off from a lot of what we are and open ourselves to Coca Cola advertsing and blah.

"He is a little timid sir. It is my opinion that were you to introduce him into the company of a goose and invite him to say boo to it, he would be unwilling to comply with your request."

"Thank you for sharing your views with us."

"And if I might be permitted to continue on the goose topic for one further moment sir..."

"Yes, Nameless?"

"To say that I despise the creatures sir. That is all that I wished to add. Rarely do I see a goose standing in that preposterous way that they have, sir, like a pair of insolent and partially dismembered bagpipes, when I am not tempted to perform violence on it. On one particular occasion, sir, I succumbed to temptation. I thank you, sir, for your indulgence." So saying, he withdrew.

•

The thing about Nameless is that he claims to be a lot nastier than he is.

But he takes out most of his real rage on his animals and plants.

I imagine him hosing them down with neat Baby Bio, in a kind of desperate rage of caring.

They are all wilting, sick and bedraggled, stained and dripping with neat Baby Bio.

"I mean look at these plants. I just wish they'd say what they want, I'd give it to them. But what is it? More water? Less water? I give them more water and less water till I'm blue in the face. Sun? Food? More sun? Less food? They just sit there and wilt and sulk. Most of them die, I think they do it out of spite. Everything I try they react the same way. I water them they wilt. I don't water them they wilt even quicker. I'd do anything if they'd only respond. Just show a little willingness to meet me halfway. Talk to them. By God I talk to them. Plead with them. Scream at them. They just sit in their pots and sulk. Pots I gave them! Little bastards."

•

Pot death.

Cyclamens are the worst. They die. That is all they do. They just allow you to buy them in order to sit there and die at you. Well, this one is not going to make me feel guilty. I'm not going to give it the chance to wither up and wilt at me. Your fun finishes here, buddy!"

With a twist of his shoulders he delivered a massive thwack of the spade against the cyclamen pot. It hurtled through the greenhouse, shattered against the rear brick wall, and dribbled in heavy bits to the ground. Elegant little flowers peeked brokenly out from under the clods of over-watered earth in silent reproach. Nameless stamped on them, ground them with his heels, slapped the earth off his hands and hobbled ferociously from the room.

•

I think that Nameless is, after all, Dirk's manservant, a sort of deranged and malformed Jeeves. His back is all twisted about. I have constant back troubles which weaken me, they weaken me terribly. Just picking up a teapot makes him clench his entire face. You wouldn't, would you sir, think that I was as strong as an ox."

"Well, it would depend on which ox..."

Anyway, on one occasion he gets attacked by some villain, who gets Nameless into a half nelson. When he increases the pressure something deep in Nameless's back goes crunch, click, and his spine ripples back into shape.

A look of stunned shock crossed Nameless's face, and passed rapidly on to the face of his assailant, who hardly had time to start working out why he was suddenly hurtling through the air before he had to start wondering instead why he was slowly sliding up a wall that when he had last looked at it had been at least ten feet away, and also why so many bits of him were hurting so much. His head continued to slide up the wall until it made severe contact with the ceiling, which at the last moment suddenly turned out to be the floor instead. The sheer quantity of conflicting data that suddenly needed to be processed unexpected data processing required by all this caused his brain to go 'bing' and he spent the next two minutes dreaming happily of seal pits in Suffolk for reasons which it is not the purpose of

- Conversation between two people who habitually daydream tends to involve a lot of sudden and radical changes of subject as each speaker tried vainly and at short notice to remember what it was the other was speaking about.

- Mind-witheringly explosively astoundingly blisteringly dull

- Postcard: I've marked a room with a cross completely at random. It's not the one I'm staying in.

- from le Cep restaurant in Beaune.

Couple in restaurant, very shyly not talking to each other. He was a young and slightly overweight American who wore a small and tightly fitted smile as if to suggest that he had his own reasons with which he was quietly pleased for not saying anything at this time. She was a blond and fragile English rose. She sat blinking and delicately clutching the fine stem of her wine glass, furiously conscious of her upbringing which said that she must make conversation. From time to time a half formed thought would break nervously from her lips. The American would lean forward slyly and say "pardon?"

The smile would broaden with surprise and relax whenever the conversation went on for one more rally

He would occasionally have his attention distracted for a moment by some event at a nearby table – the chink of a glass, the arrival of another course, and he would glance around with his smile to check it out. "Oh yes," his smile would say "they have chinked their glass. Well, that's exactly the sort of glass that would chink, of course, and they are exactly the sort of people who would chink it in that way. Exactly what one would have expected."

The smile would tighten its grip by a notch and his glance would then swivel back and fasten itself on to his own glass.

By the end of the evening their glances had hardened in directions other than each other, and bed tonight was going to be a perfunctory business punctuated by animal cries addressed to their respective mothers, saying "Look what I got" and "look what you got me into."

"I think I'm going to have that. That's framboise. That's raspberries or sump'n."

- The food.

The ingredients had the air of being rather startled at being introduced to each other in public and struck up a rather uneasy relationship on the plate.

The sauces all had that slightly granular quality which suggests that things haven't gone entirely calmly in the kitchen.

- Very rich person – has lots of money which they don't understand how they have. They

Relate
to
rhino

Smell is a much more primitive and powerful sense than sight or hearing. Sight and hearing are the senses that the modern world uses. All communication that we hold to be of any account is by those two senses. We read, we write. We talk, we watch television. We listen to the radio. We listen to arguments, we listen to music. There are hugely developed parts of the brain continually ready to process sight and sound, to sift meaning out of them.

Smell we do very little with. It tells us if the toast is burning or the milk is off. Otherwise it is a language we simply don't know, which is why it can catch us so fearfully off our guard, and suddenly smelling again the soap you were washed with as a child roars through like out emotions like a

- You work very hard at being succesful in order to be loved, and then expect people to love you for yourself rather than for your success.

Take the Sword of Courage, buckle unto yourself the Shield of Integrity, stride forth and do battle with the Salmon of Doubt

- This should be a phrase used by somebody that Dirk encounters. It should be someone who thinks that they lend literary depth to their speech with by filling it with metaphorcial images. Unfortunately most of them are completely preposterous, as is this one. However, Dirk decides it is strangely appropriate and deliberately adopts it, quoting it frequently.

Among the great qualities of human beings are how wrong we can be, and also how quickly we forget.

On visiting a restaurant:

"Imagine the finest, most delightful meal you have ever tasted..."

"Yes..."

"And keep thinking of it. It may help sustain you through the horrors of the meal you are actually about to eat."

This idea is drawn from my telling Richard's producer that I didn't like Quest For Fire (he produced it) and his director that the Return of the Jedi was too much like the Muppet Movie (he directed the Muppet Movie).

It's just a thought about a plot device for a book.

We have a scene in which someone makes just such a dreadful faux pas as one of the above, and then says "Well, I think I'll just jump out of this window"

Meanwhile, we have been following another strand of plot in which something is going to happen on a particular street at a particular time. Later we discover in parenthesis that the person concerned is in hospital, and also that the event, whatever it was, was disturbed by having someone jump out of the window on to it.

At the end of the book the whole of California sinks into the sea taking with it x million people who 3 million years later became useful as fuel.

During the course of the book we will visit the far future and hear something about a wonderful new form of fuel, which is actually, as we discover at the end, several million anciently dead Californians.

"If he is a typical example of the man in the street, then I have to say that the next lunatic who goes berserk in the the street with a sub-machine gun does so with my blessing."

Truth is anything which can be proved by a clever lawyer.

•

Muzak: the drab and monotonous horn-line that lulls the listener into a false sense of despair.

•

When the sun leaves the desert it seems to take the whole world with it, and to make a point of leaving you, personally, behind.

•

It really was enough to make a nun say fuck.

•

He awoke to discover that he was a dog.

He didn't realise straight away because he always felt a little muzzy in the mornings, and it was, after all, a completely unexpected turn of events. He lay there, and slowly pieced the evidence together.

•

In my head is the perpetual brrrr brrrr rhythm of the phone ringing waiting for the real sound to fill it.

•

There were certain onions sitting unneeded, sour and furry in the bottom of a pickle jar in a dusty corner of the larder. They had been there for many years, gathering grime and offensiveness, unthought of. He only thought of them now because suddenly he knew how they felt.

"I would like some coffee," I said. I got up and went wearily over to the percolator in which yesterday's coffee was being kept hot and viscous. I poured some into a polystyrene mug, tipped in a little creamer powder from another, looked for a clean pencil to stir it with, took a tiny sip, and then poured it down the sink instead.

Dear Douglas

ARVIND ETHAN DAVID

Dear Douglas

The first time I wrote to you was nearly 30 years ago, in 1994. I was an 18-year-old undergraduate student at Oxford, and I had wanted your permission to adapt your novel *Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency* into a stage play.

After some time, a response came from your wonderful agents at the Ed Victor Literary Agency. I wish I still had a copy of that letter, but I remember what it said:

‘Douglas does not believe that his novel *Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency* is suitable for adaptation for the stage, or indeed, for any other medium. But he will not stop you from trying.’

So we tried. We tried to reinvent your complex, brilliant, baffling novel, with its multiple timelines, time-travel, ghosts, aliens, ghostly aliens, murders and horses into something that could work on stage.

Incredibly, some months later, you came to see the results.

I remember with bowel-clenching clarity, sitting two rows behind you, watching you watch our version of your creation. I remember my despair when you didn't laugh at all for the first 10 minutes, and then the relief when you did, and that your big honking laugh was a tonic to the whole company. I remember when you took out a pencil and made some notes in your program.

I also remember the dinner afterwards. Terrified, I asked you what you thought. You tilted your giant head to one side and said, ‘Well, you know, you've made me think for the first time that maybe there is a TV show in *Dirk Gently*, and maybe I should get around to making it...’

You never did, one of many tragedies of your early death. Twenty years later, I made it for you, starring Elijah Wood and Samuel Barnett. Netflix and Hulu and BBC America released it to millions of

people, introducing a new generation to the incomparable Dirk Gently, and they came to love him as much as I did.

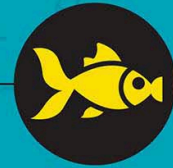
I wish I could have watched you watch it. I'm certain your pencil would have come out again.

Thank you for not stopping me from trying.

Arvind

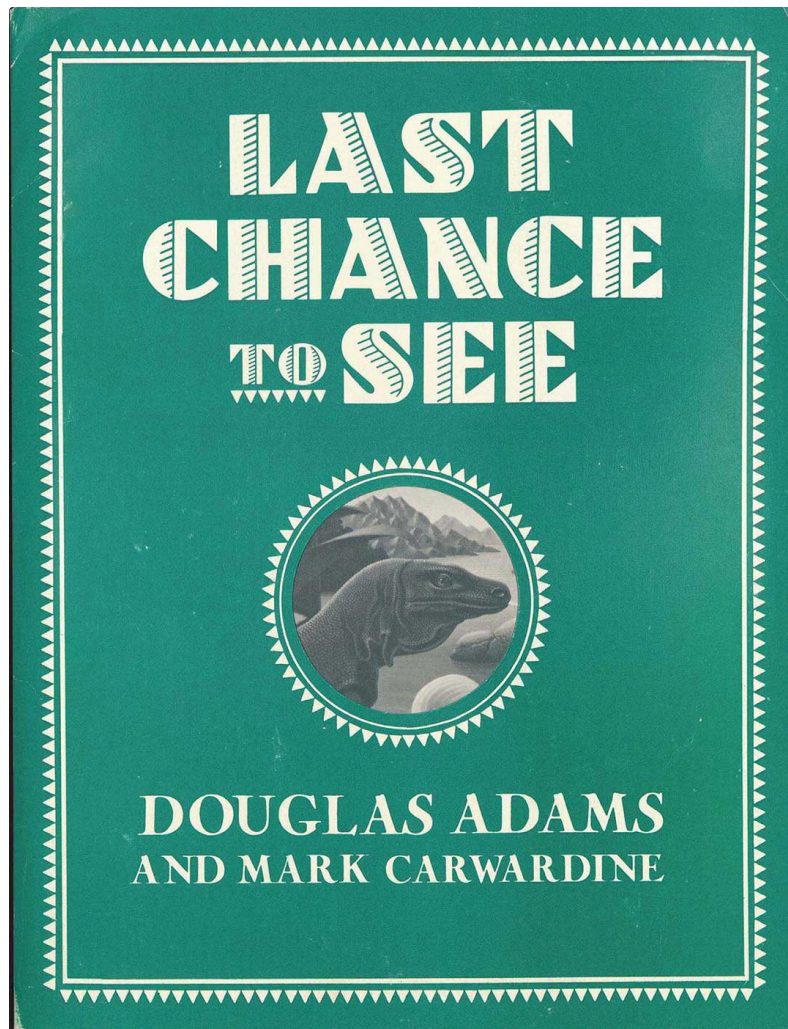


Arvind Ethan David is a writer and producer who has made (so far): eight feature films, three television shows, two musicals, five graphic novels, two table-top games, three Audiodramas and one perfect daughter. His career started, continues and will probably end with the work of Douglas Adams. The illustration above is by Ilias Kyriazis, and is an imaginative piece of the night when Douglas Adams came to see Arvind Ethan David's stage adaptation of *Dirk Gently*.



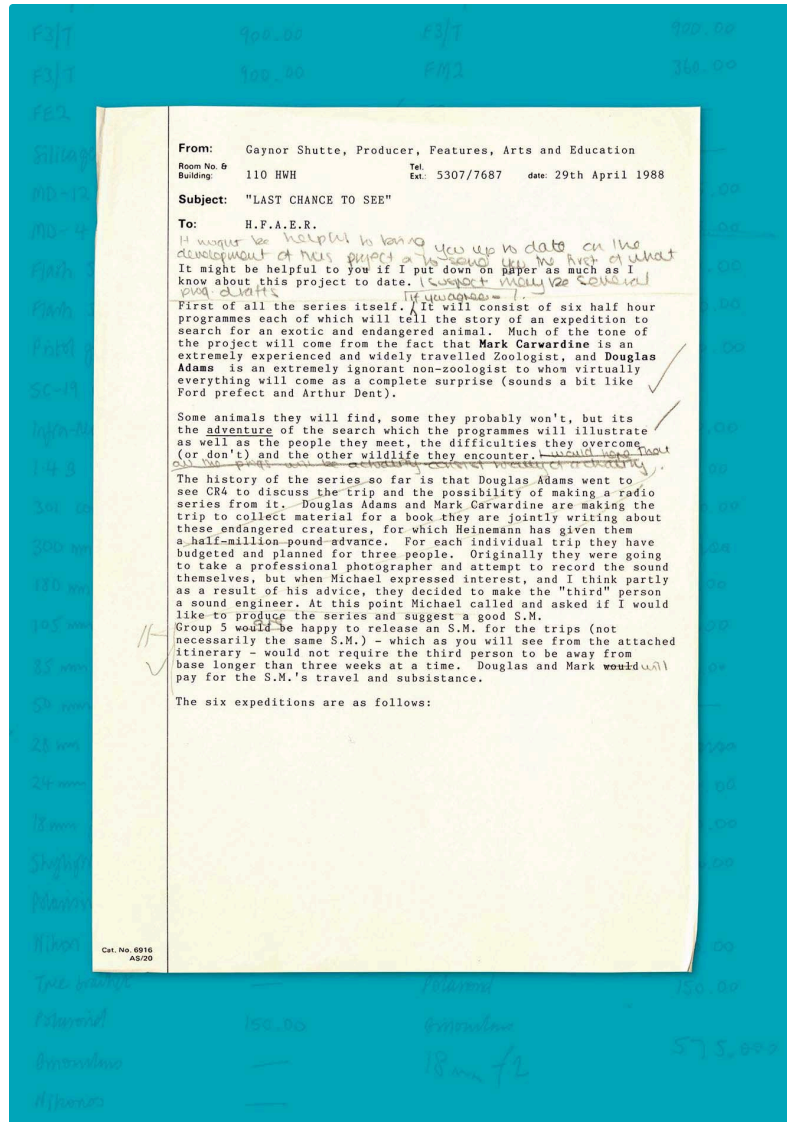
ELEVEN

Last Chances



***Last Chance to See* took Douglas and Mark Carwardine to far-flung places in search of species on the brink of extinction and producing both a radio programme and a book. This, and later Douglas's work for Save the Rhino (also featured in this chapter), became a firm passion and source of pride for him.**

PLANNING THE TRIP



Publishers Heinemann paid an advance of £500,000 towards a book by Douglas and Mark that would fund their trip. They needed other sponsors, too, and Douglas asked the Controller of BBC Radio 4 if the station might like to consider sending along a few sound recordists. And indeed they did: producer Gaynor Shutte shared duties with Steven Faux and Chris Muir.

EXPEDITION CHECKLIST	
Travel	Clothes
Passport(s)	Hat
Visa/entry permit	Shoes
Immunisation certificates	Walking boots
Ticket(s)	Socks, pants, hanks
Spare passport photos	Headover/gloves
International driving licence	Shorts
UK driving licence	Trousers
Insurance details	Shirts
Numbers	T-shirts
	Flip-flops
Money	Tie(s)
Local currency	Sweaters
Sterling	Jacket/suit
Dollars	Zoot suit/coat/umbrella
Travellers cheques	Swimming trunks
Credit cards	Khaki gear
Neck purse	Pyjamas
Money belt	
Paperwork	Camera equipment
Letters of introduction	35mm camera bodies
Business cards	Polaroid camera
Notes, information	Compact camera
Pens, paper	Photography belt
Field and travel guides	Lenses/converters
Phrase book/dictionary	Tripod/monopod/tree bracket
Map(s)	Lens hoods
Addresses	Flash gear
	Spare batteries
Miscellaneous	Underwater gear
Washing powder	Film
Swimming goggles/snorkels	Equipment bag(s)
Water purification tablets	Padlock
Paracord	Motordrives
Torch	Infra-red remote control
Plastic bags	Tissues/clean air
Glasses/sunglasses	Extension bellows
First Aid Kit	Silicagel
Compass	X-ray bag
Watch	
Penknife/survival knife	Other equipment
Food/sweets	Binoculars/telescope
Water bottle	Dictaphone (+ tapes)
Gifts (inc cigarettes)	Shortwave radio
Malaria tablets	Sony Professional (+ tapes)
Loo roll	Laptop computer (+ discs)
Reading books/magazines	
Matches/lighter	Overnight
Candle	Sleeping bag/cobra bivi bag
Rucksack(s)	Mosquito net
Mosquito spray/headband	Toiletries
Mosquito coils	Towel
	Alarm clock
	Tunnel tent

Douglas and Mark purchased some new camera gear. After much consulting of diaries and other deliberations, they were ready to go in the summer of 1988. Accounts vary, but Douglas may have been advised that, for tax reasons, it might be a good time to spend much of the year out of England! His friend Stephen Fry moved into Douglas's Islington home, minding it for the duration of the trip. He recalls using Douglas's enormous bath and taking calls from him in far-distant time zones, at odd times of the night.

LAST CHANCE EXPEDITIONS (1988–89)

Our guide was Gusti Mademik Swastika. The "Gusti" is the family name. 'Madem' is the name given to the ~~the~~ second child of a family. ~~There~~ There are four different names given to the children of a family according to the order in which they were born. Since most Indonesian families are no more than four, they then cycle the names around one more, sometimes sticking 'nik' on the end to distinguish them from their elder siblings.

The last name, Swastika, was the one name that was given to ~~me~~ a child, a given name which we would call a Christian name, but it was by no means clear why it ever called ~~me~~ ^{me} by this name.

There was a man of immense good character and down humbling with laughter and enthusiasm for everything that happened and everything we said.

We explored about the gradations of the Hindu temples - there are four different types - the domestic temple for the home, the power temple dedicated to Dharma, Karma or Shiva, the functional temple for requesting the grace of crops and so on, and the temple for public ceremonial temples.

Domestic temple

We visited one temple and had a look around it. We took photographs of a priest who prayed and chanted devoutly whenever you waved a camera at him for which he expected a tip - and placed into a copper plate whenever you put your camera away.

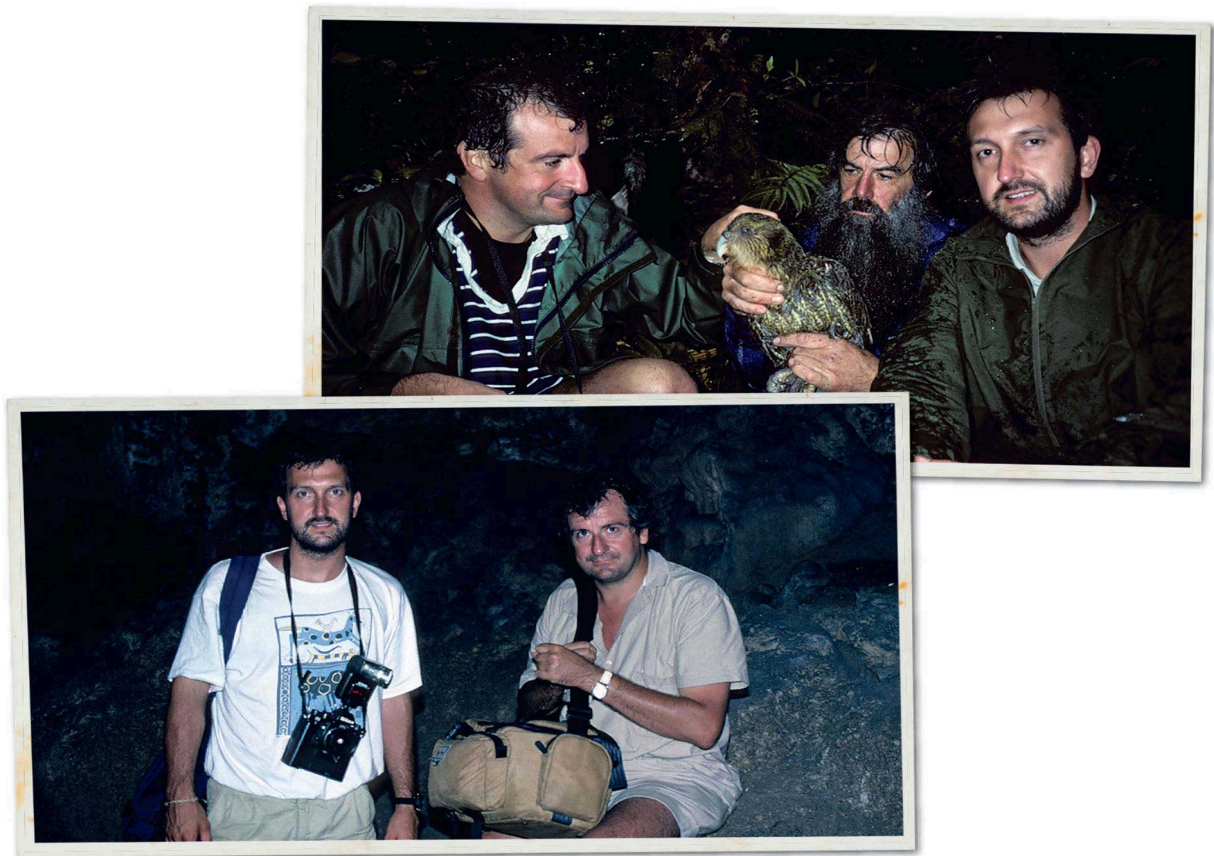
I took one group of photographs of him for which he bowed and prostrated devoutly, sitting serenely and murmuring chants under his breath. He made it clear that I was expected a tip for this, which I was happy

END

don't mean a LEAST of YOUR LIFE

to give him. He accepted this with devout
benignity and murmuring and smiling and shifted
it into a side pocket from which he then
drew a ^{tiny} ~~small~~ tobacco. He then ~~smoked~~ ^{sniffed} ~~sniffed~~
and sniled his friends and then ~~completely~~
~~handed~~ ^{handed} ~~passed~~ ^{passed} them into his ~~own~~ ^{own} ~~inexhaustible~~
compulsory insular tobacco habit his lower lip
and ~~his~~ ^{his} ~~gum~~ ^{gum}. I had been with him
some previous, and then suddenly ~~noticed~~ ^{noticed} that
I had ~~not~~ ^{not} ~~been~~ ^{been} at the wrong
selling ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~remarkable~~ ^{remarkable} ~~how much of the~~ ^{how much of the} ~~three~~ ^{three}
trads we were in ~~London~~ ^{London} we had ~~misplaced~~ ^{misplaced}
night) I had to take the ~~proper~~ ^{proper} ~~again~~ ^{again}.
Finally the ~~first~~ ^{first} ~~passed~~ ^{passed} ~~time~~ ^{time} ~~between~~ ^{between} ~~and~~ ^{and}
~~into~~ ^{into} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~had~~ ^{had} ~~been~~ ^{been} ~~between~~ ^{between} ~~possibly~~ ^{possibly} ~~shared~~ ^{shared}
this was to the back of his mouth and
became breathle one more. I took some
more papers and then there was more
murmuring and nothing and clanking and
snorting. He then seemed to abandon
his tobacco and in favour of a cigarette.
This seemed to give him the ~~appearance~~ ^{appearance}
because every time he happened to turn in
his direction he had humbly to hide
the cigarette and remove his pining
posture. He had to avoid looking directly
at him, or at least to avoid making it
clear on of there was the greatest danger

The purpose of the trip was to raise awareness of the plight of certain endangered animals, and this Douglas and Mark managed admirably, with the radio programmes and in the book. Each man brought their expertise to the projects: Mark explaining the animals and their habitats to Douglas and he, in turn, revealing these truths in an easily accessible – and memorably hilarious – way. Douglas's observations and his chronicling of the more human aspects of air travel (dodgy old aircraft, mad pilots, corrupt customs officials), or by boat on choppy waters, or across rough terrain in a Land Rover, and then roughing it in some of the worst sleeping conditions, are often the funniest parts. These excerpts are good examples of that. This piece (below and opposite) is about an impromptu minibus tour on Bali after an extra stay overnight due to intransigent officialdom at the airport.



Photos taken by Mark Carwardine of he and Douglas on their expedition for *Last Chance to See*.

Our guide was Gusti Madenik Swastika. The ‘Gusti’ is the family name. ‘Made’ is the name given to the second child of a family. There are four different names given to the children of a family according to the order in which they were born. Since most Indonesian families run to more than four, they then cycle the names around once more, sometimes sticking ‘nik’ on the end to distinguish them from their elder siblings. The last name, Swastika, was the one name that was given to a child as a given name, what we would call a Christian name, but it was by no means clear who ever called them by this name.

Gusti was a man of immense good humour and charm, bubbling with laughter and enthusiasm for everything that happened and everything we said. He explained about the gradations of the Hindu temples – there are four different types – the domestic temple for the

home, the lower temple dedicated to Brahmah, Vishnu & Shiva, the functional temple for regulating the growth of crops and so on, and the big public ceremonial temples.

We visited one temple and had a look around it. We took photographs of a priest who prayed and chanted devoutly whenever you waved a camera at him – for which he expected a tip – and relaxed with a cigarette whenever you put your camera away.

I took one group of photographs of him for which he bowed and prayed devoutly, smiling serenely and murmuring chants under his breath. He made it clear that he expected a tip for this which I was happy to give him. He accepted this with devout bowing and murmuring and smiling and stuffed it into a side pocket from which he then drew a pouch of tobacco. He teased and sorted the strands and then patted them into wads and carefully inserted them between his lower lip and gum. I had been watching him surreptitiously, and then suddenly noticed that my flash had been at the wrong setting. (It's remarkable how much of the time that we were in Indonesia we had insufficient light.) I had to take the photos again.

Hurriedly the priest hid the tobacco pouch, shoved the wad to the back of his mouth and became beatific once more. I took some more pictures and then there was more murmuring and nodding and chanting and smiling. He then seemed to abandon his tobacco wad in favour of a cigarette. This seemed to give him trouble however, because every time we happened to turn in his direction, he had hurriedly to hide the cigarette and resume his praying posture. We had to avoid looking directly at him, or at least to avoid making it look as if there was the slightest danger of our raising our cameras.



2 Feb 89.

Darling Jane,

Excuse the paper, it's all I have with me. We are currently in a small 16-seater twin engined plane flying over the Great Rift valley with Mt Kenya to the right and Kilimanjaro off to the left, heading down first to Tanzania and then up to Bukuru in Zaire. It's a tiny charter airline run by missionaries, which meant that the flight started with a brief prayer, which is something I found rather startling. I could do without the feeling of being asked to commit our souls to God before take off. There is such a suffocating air of goodness on the plane that I wish I had some chewing gum which I could evilly stick under the seat. Still, it was the only flight we could get and we were lucky to get it.

Although ~~we~~ we were on different flights

This is a draft of a letter to Jane Belson (then his live-in girlfriend, later his wife) written by Douglas in a plane over Africa during the expedition.

going by different routes, Mark + Chris and I arrived at Nairobi airport almost simultaneously because ~~their~~ their flight was almost two hours late. We got stuck in almost immediately - Mark lived in Nairobi for six months once and knows it well. We borrowed a Land Rover belonging to some friends of his and we drove off into Nairobi National Park. Just at the gate of the Park someone pointed out to us that we had a puncture, which was incredibly lucky. Ten minutes later and we would have been deep inside it in lion country and unable to get out of the car.

2 Feb 89.

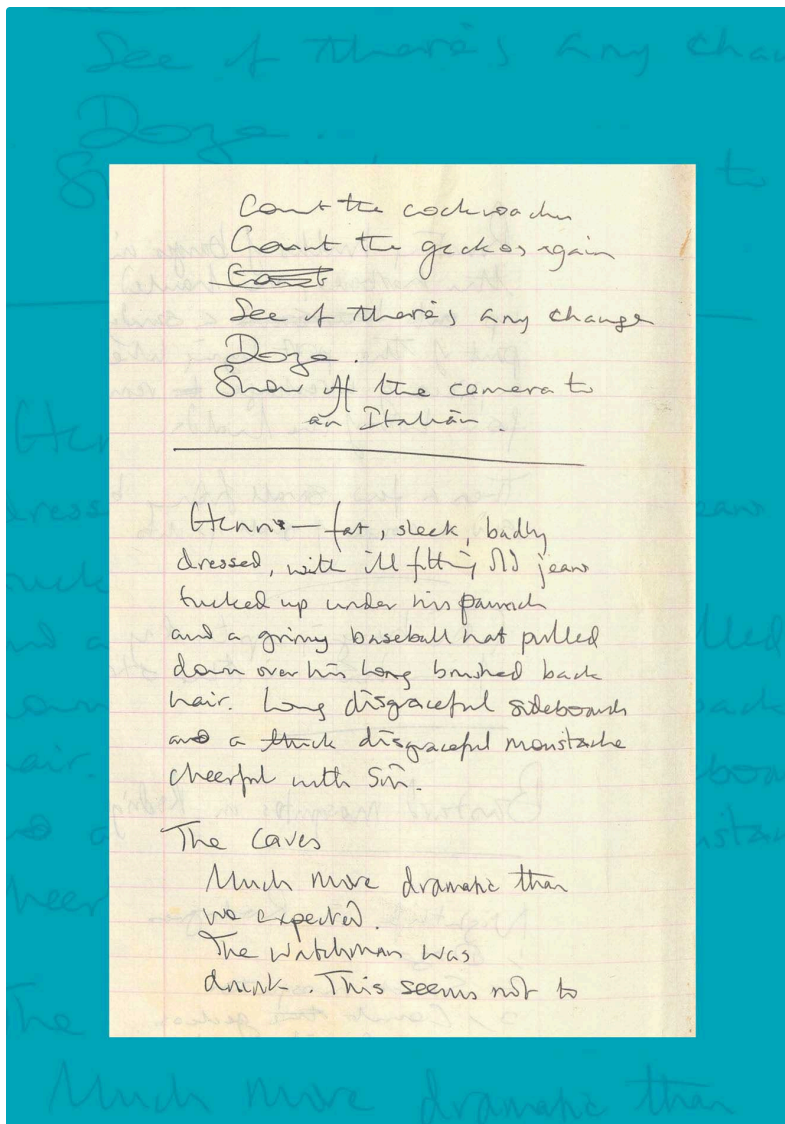
Darling Janey,

Excuse the paper, it's all I have with me. We are currently in a small 16-seater twin engine plane flying over the Great Rift Valley with Mt. Kenya to the right and Kilimanjaro off to the left, heading down first to Tanzania and then up to Bukavu in Zaire. It's a tiny charter airline run by missionaries, which meant that the flight started with a brief prayer, which is something I found rather startling. I could do without the feeling of being asked to commit our souls to God before take-off. There is such a suffocating air of goodness on the plane that I wish I had some chewing gum which I could evilly stick under the seat. Still, it was the only flight we could get and we were lucky to get it.

Although we were on different flights going by different routes, Mark & Chris and I arrived at Nairobi airport almost simultaneously because their flight was almost two hours late. We got stuck in

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Count the cockroaches
Count the geckos again
~~Count~~
See if there's any change
Doze.
Show off the camera to
an Italian.

Henri—fat, sleek, badly
dressed, with ill-fitting old jeans
tucked up under his pants
and a grimy baseball hat pulled
down over his long brushed back
hair. Long disgraceful sideburns
and a thick disgraceful mustache
cheerful with sin.

The Caves

Much more dramatic than
we expected.
The Watchman was
drunk. This seems not to

After several days on Mauritius and a trip to Round Island, the team eventually arrived on Rodrigues Island to finally see the much-anticipated 'world's rarest fruitbats'. This was a notably brief bit in the book (though slightly more expanded in the radio show). Douglas's notebook reveals why his mind wasn't on the topic, and it began when they were met by a driver called Henri (below, and transcribed on [page 251](#)).

have been a coincidence. His three sons conducted us through the caves. Normally the watchman prevents his sons from accepting tips. So they arrange to pre-invest in getting him drunk so that they can take him into the caves and accept their tips.

They wrap an old sack around a metal rod, pour petrol over it and set fire to it.

Afterwards we went to the forest to look for the bats.

The main consequence of this (apart from the fact that we succeeded in seeing the rarest fruitbat in the world) was that I got bitten by about ~~the~~ 200 mosquitos. This was in the time that it took for me

to discover that I had
forgotten to bring my own
insect repellent and wait for
Lark to finish applying some
to himself and then borrow
his. ~~The~~ To be honest the
consequence of this was that
I didn't give a fig about the
funtasks once the bites had
started to take effect. If
there was a button I could
press which would permanently
rid the world of all its ~~a~~ mosquitoes
in a moment I would hit the
button, and let the ecological
~~the~~ results fall where they
may. That, at least is my
reaction at the moment as I
sit writing this on the following
evening after a terrible ~~night~~
~~a~~ ~~settling~~ night of feverish
scratching and clawing at the

air in a vain attempt to stop myself continuing to scratch. Then a day on the boat to the Ile de Coco, again trying desperately hard to stop myself scratching and continually failing. My legs are a great mass of red lumps each of which seethes at me, and gives me just a brief relief while I'm actually scratching at the thing but then feels as if it's on fire as soon as I stop.

On the island, after exploring we had some lunch and then lay ourselves out on benches and chairs to get some siesta - during which ~~when~~ my bites seethed at me relentlessly. When we arose again ~~It happened~~ we went for a swim - which was pretty pathetic, about two

and a half feet of water ~~at~~ with
a sandy bottom and few desultory
bits of brown seaweed.

Emerging from the sea
and touching myself I was
approached by an enquiring mosquito,
at which point I achieved in an
instant the highest point of
happiness that I think I had
yet attained in my life so far
and would cheerfully have
machine gunned the bugger.

Othman Ile de Coco was an
idyllic island. It looked not so
much like a tropical tree lined
island as a modish hairstyle
set in an azure sea.

Two very rare birds - the Noddy
- found in

Henri – fat, sleek, badly dressed, with ill-fitting old jeans tucked up under his paunch and a grimy baseball hat pulled down over his long, brushed back hair. Long disgraceful sideburns and a thick disgraceful moustache cheerful with sin.

The Caves

Much more dramatic than we expected. The watchman was drunk. This seems not to have been a coincidence. His three sons conducted us through the caves. Normally the watchman prevents his sons from accepting tips, so they arrange to pre-invest in getting him drunk so they can take tourists into the caves and accept their tips. They wrap an old sack around a metal rod, pour petrol over it and set fire to it.

Afterwards we went to the forest to look for the bats. The main consequence of this (apart from the fact that we succeeded in seeing the rarest fruitbat in the world) was that I got bitten by about 200 mosquitos. This was in the time that it took for me to discover that I had forgotten to bring my own insect repellent and wait for Mark to finish applying some to himself and then borrow his. To be honest the consequence of this was that I didn't give a fig about the fruitbats once the bites had started to take effect. If there was a button I could press which would permanently rid the world of all its mosquitos, in a moment I would hit the button and let the ecological results fall where they may. That, at least, is my reaction at the moment, as I sit writing this on the following evening, after a terrible seething night of feverish scratching and clawing at the air in a vain attempt to stop myself continuing to scratch. Then a day on the boat to the Ile de Coco, again trying to stop myself scratching and continually failing. My legs are a great mass of red lumps, each of which seethes at me, and gives me just a brief relief while I'm actually scratching at the thing but then feels as if it's on fire as soon as I stop.

...we had some lunch and then lay ourselves out on benches and chairs to get some siesta – during which my bites seethed at me relentlessly.

On the island, after exploring, we had some lunch and then lay ourselves out on benches and chairs to get some siesta – during which my bites seethed at me relentlessly. When we arose again, we went for a swim – which was pretty pathetic, about two and a half feet of water with a sandy bottom and a few desultory bits of brown seaweed. Emerging from the sea and towelling myself, I was approached by an enquiring mosquito, at which point I achieved in an instant the highest point of hatred that I think I had yet attained in my life so far and would cheerfully have machine gunned the bugger.

Otherwise Ile de Coco was an idyllic island. It looked not so much like a tropical tree lined island as a modish hairstyle set in an azure sea. Two very rare bids – the Noddy – found in...



Things to take on next trip.

Suitcase with built-in wheels
Mandarin Duck bag
Zoom lenses.

Douglas's final note regarding the expedition...

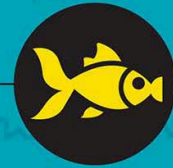
RHINO CLIMB (1994)



Perhaps inevitably after the *Last Chance* trip, Douglas became a passionate advocate for natural causes. This famously included the plight of the rhino. In 1994, employees from the London offices of Save the Rhino International co-opted Douglas into their trek to raise awareness. Making their way 320km across part of east Africa, from Mombasa, Kenya, to the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro in Tanzania (lying 5,895m above sea level), the main rhino team consisted of James Hersov, Tom Kenyon Slaney, Johnny Roberts, Will Stanhope, David Stirling and (taking care of the essential rhino costume) William 'Todd' Jones, known for his creature performances in film and theatre. Todd said that Douglas and his sister Jane joined them near the Tsavo National Park and took their turns in the rhino get-up, too (above top, and bottom right).

Douglas's presence, and later an article that appeared in *GQ* magazine documenting his involvement, successfully raised the profile of the endeavour and – as a consequence – the plight of the rhinos. The positive influence of the expedition was such that when the Tanzanian parliament called a vote intended to allow the reshaping of the national parks so that more licenses would be available for shooting wildlife, the Minister for Parks was disappointed – the result went against his expectations.





TWELVE

Fan of Science and Technology

THE NEW YORK ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

PRESENTED TO

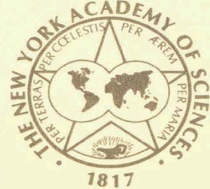
Douglas Adams

IN RECOGNITION AND CERTIFICATION OF BEING ELECTED

AN ACTIVE MEMBER

OF THIS ACADEMY

June 1993



FOUNDED 1817

Cyril M. Harris
PRESIDENT AND CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

[Signature]
SECRETARY - TREASURER

A man fascinated by technology, Douglas Adams was both an advocate for conservation and a forward-thinking innovator, whose ideas, such as they might pop up in his writing, articles and speeches, were often arguably ahead of their time. This chapter collects some of the evidence for his inventive talents.

SCIENCE AND CHAOS THEORY

The man who designed television sets.
I have a secret inside me
Cleverly rolled up in a tight little ball
Screwed packaged and tight
And I like to roll it when no one is looking.
Whenever I pass a television shop
(And I pass a television shop at every opportunity)
I take note of how the people stop to watch
The televisions in the window.
I peer over their shoulders ^{awkwardly}, as if in ignorance
But they don't know my tight rolled ball, I think
They don't know that those televisions at which they are
So anxiously peering
To them the latest and most beautiful
To me are
Pretty poor stuff.
I design televisions.
My latest one is three inches thick.

These undated handwritten scraps from the 1970s demonstrate Douglas's early interest in technology, science and chaos theory. As is often the case, the couple of paragraphs relating to chaos in his notebook fizzle out, incomplete. His poem on television design (below) finishes with the revelation of a TV that is 'three inches thick'. The notion is far ahead of its time, as it would be some years before any of us could buy a set that thin!

The man who designed television sets

I have a secret inside me
Cleverly rolled up in a tight little ball
Screwed packaged and tight
And I like to roll it when no one is looking.

Whenever I pass a television shop
(And I pass a television shop at every opportunity)
I take note of how the people stop to watch
The televisions in the window.

I peer over their shoulders awkwardly as if in ignorance But they
don't know my tight rolled ball, I think They don't know that those
televisions at which they are So anxiously peering
To them the latest and most beautiful To me are
Pretty poor stuff.
I design televisions.
My latest one is three inches thick.

We live in a simple chaos – a chaos caused by our inability to
understand the extreme, baffling simplicity of the rules by which our
universe is governed, a simplicity so fundamental that it becomes
blurred beneath the complexity of its own efforts.

Early man had an awful lot to learn, an awful lot. Everything.
However, there were certain things that were self-evidently true –
they didn't require any argument or analysis.

Let's look a long way out for a moment.

What I would like to feel we have built, fifty or a hundred or two hundred years from now, is a soft model of the world. The Dataside of the world – for those who remember back to the early days of Starship Titanic. A database of the world. A cddb of the world. So that every object in the real world has its counterpart in the soft world. Except that every object in the soft world has a wealth of information attached to it – what it is, how it works, what its history is, what people think of it, what their experience of it is, and the myriad ways in which it is connected to the billions of other objects in the soft world.

Devices we use as Guides will essentially be windows through which the hard world and the soft world – the matterside and the dataside – view each other and connect with each other. In the real world the most potent and powerful connection between any two objects is physical proximity. In the soft world it can be any connection that anybody can imagine.

In the real world if you want to know what the view from the top of the Eiffel Tower looks like you have to go there.

In the soft world you can ask the Guide to show you what it looks like from the top of the Eiffel Tower. Maybe it can show you the view through a webcam there. Or maybe it can construct a VR view for you in real time based on everything it knows about everything that can currently be seen from the top of the Eiffel tower. First thing you see is a lot of virtual graffiti, some of it quite naughty, being French. You wave it away.

And as you look down at your virtual view you ask it how many of the cars you can see from your current vantage point are British. For a moment you think it's not working. Then you say, OK, how many of them are Peugeots – the view lights up with thousands of moving dots. OK – how many of the cars you can see currently have some Bach playing on their in-car stereos. A few dozen. Oh, there's one playing your favourite recording of the Schübler preludes. Do they have their flag up? Yes! She'll talk to you – but only because the only thing you'd asked about her was what she was listening to. Anything else and her flag would have been down for you. You chat for a bit about the music and quickly discover a tremendous rapport.

What about having dinner together? OK... but she has a gluten problem, which restricts where she can eat. And you like turbot. A couple of restaurants light up in the view. One of them looks great for a romantic tryst, lots of alcoves and dim lighting – but some of the people who've eaten there tonight have left notes saying that they're obviously understaffed in the kitchen tonight and the food has been coming out cold or reheated. The other place gets raves about the food, but it's a bit bright and noisy. You decide that good food is the thing to go for. Then you remember – damn! You're not actually in Paris, you're in New Delhi and got a bit carried away.

That's alright, says your new friend, I'm actually in Albuquerque. I'm a music squatter.

Meaning?

She just monitors the network for anybody who's looking for someone who's listening to that recording. The real occupant of the car had his flag down and wasn't talking to anybody, so she intercepted your query and really enjoyed talking to you. And now she's going out to dinner. Locally. Bye.

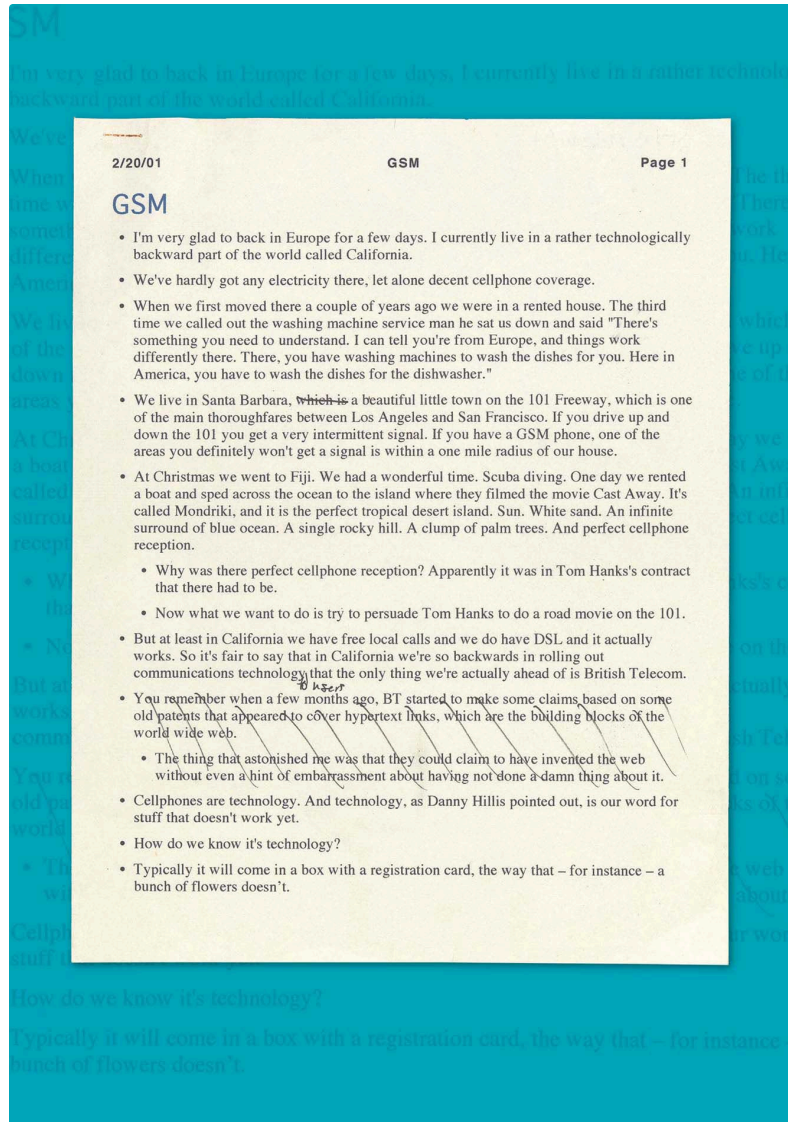
You track which restaurant she's going to and send a Margarita to her table to say thanks. But she's annoyed that you tracked her and turns connection off. Oh well, you go back to your day job, erecting advertising hoardings on Mars. Soft Mars, that is, which has recently been added to the Soft Solar System. It was quite an expensive project because you can't rely on millions of people feeding back millions of snippets of information every day, which is what keeps the Soft Earth going so well.

The mapping data from Mars has been acquired the expensive way, which means that if you want to visit Soft Mars – which is either a fully immersive environment at your local Trumbullarama, or a lower res one on your own headset, you can either pay for it and see it in its pristine state, or explore it for free and put up with all the billboards advertising new movies, such as 'Being Douglas Adams' about people who pay for the experience of banging their heads on doors a lot.

The short transcript below is from a fragment ripped from a handwritten couple of paragraphs in Douglas's notebook. It gives his take on how much humankind has to learn in order to make sense of the world.

This undated piece is post-1998, as it mentions *Starship Titanic* as a 'CDDb of the world'. The gag towards the end (about *Being Douglas Adams*) suggests 1999 or 2000, after the movie *Being John Malkovich*. Douglas was already wondering how the internet would affect developments in the CD-Rom industry, in which he was working. H2G2 was the eventual website (very like a prototype for Wikipedia) developed at The Digital Village, the company he set up with like-minded friends in 1996.

TECH TALKS



Increasingly, over the years Douglas was called upon to give talks at tech conferences, with sometimes quite influential names in the audience. On this and over the following pages are his speech notes, in full, for such an event – the Global System for Mobile Communications (GSM) convention in February 2001, in Cannes, France.

2/20/01

GSM

Page 2

- It probably comes with a sheaf of brightly coloured leaflets for you to give to the garbage man who in turn buries it in the ground for future generations to grow things in.
- It will also come with a manual, the way that, for instance, a teacup doesn't, or a chair doesn't.
 - Unless it's one of those office chair with levers and locks and tension springs all over it. Like most things designed to enhance your productivity, playing with it all day is much more fun than actually working.
- If it's a cellphone, one of the things your manual will tell you about is how to spend 17 hours straight programming your telephone numbers into it with a matchstick. This despite the fact that you already did this with the last cellphone you bought only six months ago. And despite the fact that what both of these things are is communications devices. And despite the fact that you've already got all your names or phone numbers on your computer which is also, guess what, a communications device.
- Yes, you can make them all communicate with each other. Provided you kept the little cable. And provided the cable fits both of your cellphones. And provided the software runs on your computer. And provided you kept the manual and have got nothing better to do with your life than read it.
 - And provided, of course, that the reason you're replacing your old cellphone is not that you've lost the damn thing.
- Another thing technology comes with is a power adapter. Now electricity is a fairly commonplace item these days, unless you live in California, but it comes in more flavours than Haagen-Dazs, Baskin Robbins and the iMac put together.
 - And one adapter will not fit another device. We've all got drawers full of little orphaned black bricks.
- And the in-car handsfree kit for one cellphone will certainly not fit another one either. Not even a later model from the same manufacturer.
- I understand that there is an economic imperative behind this - you don't make money on the phones, but you can make money on the accessories. But the result is that we mostly don't bother with the handsfree kits any more. We just career down the highway with the phone clamped to our ear, peering at the tiny screen, and prodding one-handedly at the buttons. Ah, so that's why evolution gave us opposable thumbs.
- On the 101 people race from one pool of reception and another and then drive as slowly as they can while they're in one, weaving around the road trying to operate their phones with their thumbs.
- So this is a sales strategy that is not merely inconveniencing its customers, it's actually killing them off.

- But it's odd how patient we are with this stuff, as if we actually expect it to be clunky and awkward, which is why people put up with Microsoft Windows.
- We invent and invent and invent.
- Sometimes we get things right, more often we get things wrong and have to try again.
- Sometimes we can't help but try again even when we've already got it right once.
 - The bathroom tap for instance. Once upon a time this was a very simple device. Now you go into the bathroom in an airport or hotel and you approach the washbowl with caution. Do you turn the water on or do you push something? With your hand or your foot? Is it meant to come on automatically? Do you have to wave at it? And when you're finished, who's responsible for turning it off? You or it? Will it know? Or do you have to find somebody?
- Of course the fact that we continue to tinker with stuff that already works perfectly well echoes our own nature as evolved beings. Every act of conception is a new throw of the dice, a unique new mix of genes, some mixes more successful than others. It's the key to our adaptability. Anything that really is an improvement will tend to proliferate, and we wouldn't have got to it if we hadn't kept reshuffling and making mistakes with stuff that already seemed to be working.
 - There's a new generation of smart office chair beginning to arrive which makes a virtue of doing away with all the knobs and levers. All the springing and bracing we've learned about is still there, but it adjusts to your posture and movement automatically without you having to tell it how to.
 - Here's a prediction for you. When we have software that works like that, the world will truly be a better and happier place.
- Many years ago I invented a thing called The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy. I never meant to be predictive science fiction writer in the mode of, say, Arthur C Clarke. My reason for inventing it was purely one of narrative necessity, which is that I had lots of extra bits of story that I didn't know what to do with. I didn't know anything at all about technology in those days, and didn't think twice about any of the issues. So I just made it a bit like things I was already familiar with. It was a bit like a pocket calculator, a bit like a TV remote. It had a little window at the top and lots and lots of little buttons on the front. And if you wanted to know about anything you had to look it up in an index, find the right number, tap it in and wait for the entry to come up on the tiny screen. I'd invented WAP! But as I say, I didn't know anything about technology. I didn't know about Xerox Parc, I didn't know about the dynabook, I didn't know about user interfaces. That's my excuse. What's yours?
- Of course, whenever we invent something new, we always base it on something we're familiar with.

- That's why the first movies were just filmed plays, proscenium arches and all.
- That's why we originally thought that a phone is something that would be used to alert you that that someone was bringing round a telegram.
 - Much the same way we now phone someone to tell them we've sent them an email.
- That's why first designed computers as a kind of super adding machine with a long feature list.
- Then as a typewriter with a long feature list.
- Then as a television with a typewriter sat in front of it.
- Now, with the coming of the world wide web, we've reinvented the computer as a kind of giant brochure.
- The computer is none of these things, but they're all things we're already familiar with, and we model them in the computer in order to make the computer usable.
- The mistake we make, of course, is to build in the limitations of the thing we're modelling along with its usefulness. That's why a word processor models the process of typing and doesn't model the process of *writing*, which is a very different thing.
- We've all had the experience of going into a shop and saying "That's nice. Have you got it in blue?" to which the answer is 'no'. End of story. Nobody at the other end of the retail chain ever discovers that you - and who knows how many other people - wanted it in blue. The exact same thing happens on websites. If you come looking for something they haven't got there is a null transaction. I wanted this movie on DVD but it's only on VHS. I wanted these jeans in a 36in leg and you only go up to 34. Nothing happens. But the easiest thing in the world would be to redesign the software so that it made a record of what it was the customer actually came looking for. The reason we don't think to do that is that there was no easy way of doing it in bricks and mortar shops, and bricks and mortar shops is still the model we're working from.
- So the new thing we've modelled in the computer is the telephone. And it's got a long feature list. Lots of extra bits that we've gradually tacked on, most of which are buried deep in menus that the average user never even finds. Same as Microsoft Word. Did you know that over half the features that Microsoft Word users ask for are already there in the program? You just can't find them, or if you can they're too much bother to use.
- So if the computer isn't a typewriter or a television or a telephone or any of these other things we've modelled in it, what actually is it?
- Well, obviously, it's a modelling device.

- We can model in it anything we care to imagine. And since it's also a communication device, the possibilities are endless. Any of your modelling devices can communicate with any of your other modelling devices and create more powerful and more complex models. Notice, that's complex, not complicated. An eye is complex. A digital camera with its boxful of manuals and cables and software installers, is complicated.
- So what should we model in our computers?
- Well, one thing it would good to get some kind of handle on is the *world*, so let's model that.
- It's a big job, but then there are a lot of us, and a lot of computers. Many more than Thomas Watson ever imagined. You may remember that he it was who, as the head of IBM commissioned a study to find out how many computers the world would actually need. The answer came back six, and Watson was determined that IBM would build them all.
 - That was back in the old top down, Big Brother view of the world. What we failed to foresee was that the world would not be dominated by one or a few giant computers sitting at the top of the hierarchy, but rather it would be *informed* by millions and millions of tiny little brothers and sisters and cousins, all down at the bottom of the hierarchy, where the information is. And that as a result we might gradually not even need a hierarchy.
- So let me say again - there are a lot of us and a lot of computers, and they are all handling information all the time, and could handle a very great deal more if we had the wit to let them.
- Let me give you an example. There are an enormous number of CDs in the world. Creating an entire discography of every CD ever recorded would be a daunting task. But a rather bright company called CDDB.com, now gracenote.com, figured out that since people frequently put cd's into their computers' cd rom drives and since computers are often connected to the internet it would be possible to create such a discography automatically. Any time that any one person happened to get their hands on an absolutely brand new recording which wasn't in the discography yet, all they had to do was spend two minutes typing up the track listing, and nobody would ever have to do it again. And if they didn't do it, someone else would.
- It only needed one person to do it. And then anybody who put a copy of that CD into their CD-rom drive anywhere in the world would be immediately presented with that track listing. It doesn't originate from the CD itself, because the CD format was specified before we thought of adding digital information to the tracks. It has come from the shared network which has recognised the CD from the exact number of bytes on it, which, like a fingerprint, is unique. So gracenote.com has a comprehensive discography of every CD recording in the world which is self-updating.

- That's just CDs.
- Imagine if every piece of information we ever generated about the world that passed through a computer, whether it's
 - a restaurant typing up its menu for the evening, whether it's
 - a shop maintaining its stock list, whether it's
 - a car noticing what speed it's going, how much petrol it's got left and where the nearest service stations are and what prices they are charging, or whether it's
 - someone measuring the wingspan of an african swallow, or
 - writing down where and when their grandmother was born, or whether it's
 - someone taking a digital photo from the top of the Great Pyramid, or just
 - of a flower that's bloomed early this year.
 - Or late. Or the settings on your thermostat and when it turned on or off.
 - Or if every time you took your child's temperature the network remembered.
- Imagine all of that gradually creating a shared software model of the world. Just imagine.
- The one thing I did get right when I came up with The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy was that it would know where you were and would come up with information appropriately. And that, of course, is the thing that makes the crucial difference to everything in that list above. If every piece of information knew the when of itself and the where of itself, so that the virtual world we created fitted over the real world like an invisible glove.
- And these devices, that we currently think of as telephones or PDAs, would be the devices that made that invisible world visible, the things which both generate the model and make it appear to us. They become windows from the real world into the virtual world, which is everywhere around us.
- Of course, they won't be like this. These are just telephones with bits added on. These will disappear. The next big wave of technology that will hit us in a very few years is nanotechnology, and it's coming a lot faster than people realise. The difference will be that instead of making computers out of stuff, we will make stuff out of computers. We will be making dumb matter smart. Instead of little screens, our displays will be sheets of paper, windows, mirrors, pools of water anything nearby that can hold an image. Sound will radiate at us from any live surface.

- How many people here find this idea either horrifying or at least very disturbing? How many of you are saying 'Yes, cellphones are all very well, but all this stuff is going a bit far?'
- I've come up with a set of rules to describe this phenomenon.
 - It comes from watching my six year old daughter grow up in a world of email, cell-phones and DVDs and all those things that frighten my mother.
 - Rule 1 - Anything that's in the world when you're born is normal and ordinary and just a part of the way the world works.
 - Rule 2 - Anything that's invented between when you're fifteen and thirty-five is new and exciting and world changing and you can probably get a career in it.
 - Rule 3 - Anything that's invented after you're thirty-five is against the natural order of things.
 - Let me quote a friend of mine, the molecular engineer Brosl Hasslacher. He says "The Romans believed that there were little gods in local things like fountains, trees, that's basically what the world will look like soon because there will seem to be little gods in there but its basically sets of computers lying around in paint or in plastics, but there will be enlarged functional spaces attached to them, paint won't be paint it will be listening, it will be recording, it can interactive. That's a very confusing world, but one of the things we learn about confusing worlds is that young people get used to them very quickly."
 - OK, let's come down to earth for a moment, because all this stuff I'm describing is still months and months away.
 - What can we do now?
 - Well, we should remember that these are communication devices. Let them be smart about what's around them and let them find ways of communicating with them. No cables. No configuration. Let's see how far Bluetooth can take us. Let phones communicate easily with computers, with televisions, with radios - oh and particularly with cars. I want my car radio to become a hands free phone device by the mere action of carrying my phone into the car. That way I can hope to get to Los Angeles without having to drive through the mangled wreckage of other phone users.
 - And we can start to build this database that is a model of the world. *Insert ←*
 - This is an idea I've been pursuing for a while, and since it grew out of The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy I called it h2g2 and started it out as a community website, a community, that is, of voluntary researchers starting to build the very guide that they would then be able to use. A collaboratively built guide, just as gracenote.com is a collaboratively built CD database. It's in its infancy, though it has already built up

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a hugely enthusiastic group of researchers pouring stuff into it. And before we could even get more than a couple of steps along the way of building the kind of infrastructure we needed to make the thing start to self-organise and self-propagate, guess what, like every other website on the planet we ran out of resources. Or money, as we call it.

- However, I am very pleased to announce that as of today it is to rise reborn. The rights to the h2g2 website have been acquired by a bunch of guys you may have heard of, called the BBC, which to me seems highly appropriate since that's where Hitchhiker was first born. I'm very hopeful that with the BBC driving it we can begin to turn it into the most extraordinary resource. Please go and look at it. If you don't like it, add something to it to make it better. You can't do that to the Nine o'clock News.
- I hope that one day it can begin to form the basis of something which brings my original vision of The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy as a mobile, personal, collaborative guide to real life.
- Meanwhile, I'd be happy just to get cellphone reception around my house.

ON ELECTRONIC BOOKS

1

Not because we expect to get all of it, because we can hope to choose the good considerably and sell many more books.

Every five or 10% of what a reader pays to read what an author has written does not go to the author who wrote it. This 85% is of intense interest to authors. So there's an awful lot of dead wood in there, quite literally, that we can - to everybody's profit - get rid of by some form of electronic distribution.

How will elec. distribution change the way that the book as we know it is distributed, and how will it change the very nature of the book. And

How will the author get paid?

There have been many attempts at electronic books in the past, and they've all failed pretty much because the technology hasn't been there.

My own experience - Voyager expanded books.

Lot of resistance to the idea of ebooks from the public. Particularly all those people who 10 years ago said they couldn't see any point in typing on a computer.

I believe this resistance will gradually disappear as ~~and~~ the electronic book itself improves and becomes smaller, lighter, simpler, cheaper, in other words, more like a book.

One other crucially important area in which it must improve radically, and I think this is the key one. A book, typically, has a resolution

SWANSON
OCTOBER 1990

These three pages of notes are Douglas's thoughts on the future possibilities of electronic books and publishing. Dating from the late 1990s, the musings are well ahead of Kindles and other ebooks. Douglas, having years earlier predicted this industry with *The Hitchhiker's Guide* itself, would sadly not live to see the concepts actually realized in the kinds of devices we all now take so much for granted. The notes are transcribed over the page.

of between 600 and 2400 dpi. A computer screen has about 74. It's not comfortable to read. When I've finished a day's work on the computer I print the stuff out and go and sit on the sofa to read it.

When resolution improves, that, coupled with the fact that the screen is backlit with, I believe change a lot of attitudes very quickly.

People say they love the feel of a book, the smell of a book. This may be true, but I'm sure a lot of people said that about the horse when the motorcar was first invented. We have managed to change our allegiance.

I said that the device has got to become more like a book, and this is important.

Alan Kay - electric motors.

The thing will be ~~the~~ a descendant of the book, not of the computer.

But we don't need to carry this too far. I'm not sure that we need to model ^{visual} page turning in an electronic book any more than ~~than~~ you needed to put reins and stirrups into a car.

Essentially the book, as we know it is approximately 100,000 words of text organised ~~linearly~~ ^{that feel a story with} with a beginning, a middle and an end, and the device we read it from has just got to offer us the cleanest simplest access to that material. It can also let us

do some things that books don't. Anyone who spends much time on computer has experienced that frustration when reading a book when you want to remind yourself who a character is or what they last said or did and it takes you ages to track it down. ~~the~~ If you're a computer user you expect to be able to do a search for it. And if you're doing research you may want to be able to search across several related books. In the digital domain the boundaries between entities tend to disappear. It's like rivers flowing into an ocean. You still get currents but you don't get river banks anymore.

So the devices must be very simple. They are not computers, they are books which have computers in them. They should also be powerful though. They need to be able to communicate. I imagine early models will need to dock to computers, but to my mind the real electronic book will be a standalone device which connects wirelessly to the net. The net is the thing which changes everything.

The net is the thing which changes everything.

Authors are used to feedback loops which are so long as to be almost meaningless.

Kurt Vonnegut, *immediacy*.

Eighty five or 90% of what a reader pays to read what an author has written does not go to the author who wrote it.

This 85% is of intense interest to authors. So there's an awful lot of dead wood in there, quite literally, that we can – to everybody's profit get rid of by some form of electronic distribution.

(Not because we expect to get all of it, of course, but because we can hope to close the gap considerably and sell many more books.) How will elec. distribution change the way that the book as we know it is distributed, and how will it change the very nature of the book.

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There have been many attempts at electronic books in the past, and they all failed pretty much because the technology hadn't been there.

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Lots of the resistance to the idea of ebooks from the public.

Particularly all those people who 10 years ago said they couldn't see any point in typing on a computer.

I believe this resistance will gradually disappear as the electronic book itself improves and becomes smaller, lighter, simpler, cheaper, in other words more like a book.

One other crucially important area in which it must improve radically and I think this is the key one. A book, typically, has a resolution of between 600 and 2400 dpi. A computer screen has about 74. It's not comfortable to read. When I've finished a day's work on the computer I print the stuff out and go and sit on the sofa to read it.

When resolution improves, that coupled with the fact that the screen is backlit, will, I believe change a lot of attitudes very quickly.

People say they love the feel of a book *[and]* the smell of a book. This may be true, but I am sure a lot people said that about the horse when the motorcar was first invented. We have managed to change our allegiance.

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The net is the thing which changes everything.

Authors are used to feedback loops which are so long as to be almost meaningless Kurt Vonnegut, immediacy...



AUDIO GURU



Once he had the money, Douglas was known to indulge his passion for high-end tech. In late 1985, he told Susie Corfield of *The Sunday Telegraph Magazine* that he owned a Bang & Olufsen television and a Panasonic video recorder, although he hardly ever watched TV and was far more interested in audio equipment – he had a Linn Sondek turntable, a Naim amplifier, Linn Isobarik speakers, a Nakamichi tape deck and a Yamaha compact disc player. In his study, he had a Nad amplifier and tuner, Boston acoustic speakers and a Mission compact disc player. This photograph, taken by Mark Gerson in 1979, shows Douglas seated in front of audio equipment that, at the time, would have been state of the art as far as Douglas's budget allowed. Gerson's letter to Douglas after the photoshoot, and further images on the contact sheet are reproduced on the below page.



24 Cavendish Avenue
St John's Wood
London NW8 9JE
telephone 01-286 5894

**Mark Gerson
Photographer
FIIP**

Oct. 12th. 1979.

Douglas Adams,
Highbury New Park.

Dear Doug,

It was very pleasant photographing you, the colour
looked particularly good and was collected by PENTHOUSE
messenger yesterday, a duplicate of the b/w contact proof
sheet is with Jacqui Graham at PAN BOOKS.

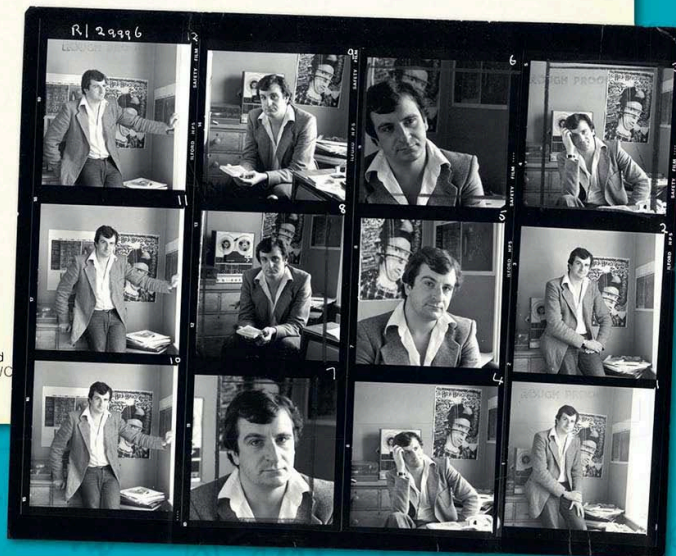
Please keep this contact sheet with my compliments,
if any magazine contacts you direct and wishes a photograph
in a hurry, they can always get in touch with me, if you so
desire.

Best regards,

Sincerely,

Mark Gerson
Mark Gerson, FIIP.

Reg. office
Mark Gerson Photography Ltd
27, John Street, London, WC
Reg. No 626 230



THE GAMEMAKER

The goal is to be Happy - but what
is happiness

If you don't play you win instantly

Have to discover the goal - goal is to discover
goal.

If you become immortal you lose the game.

Insult you in alphabetical order.

Traal - fight the Beast.

Improbability Drive.

PHQB - you get drunk.

Cause and effect goes wrong.

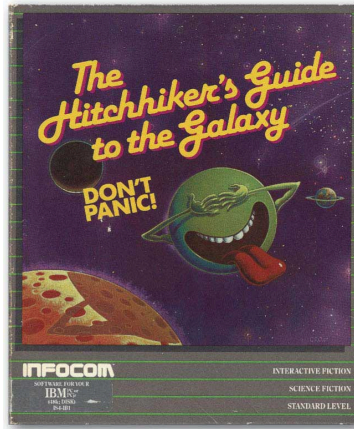
Marvin

Cocktail party.

Database - Guide.

Time Travel.	Bureaucracy
Cheating in part of game extra points	Wrong Address.
Tools - problem solving	

This page of early notes relates to the infamously difficult interactive fiction game of *The Hitchhiker's Guide* by Infocom. They were discovered among other notes mostly concerning work on the movie script. Douglas's involvement in the development of the game was fairly comprehensive – In 1985, he said he designed the 'shape and logic... and wrote the text' in collaboration with an 'extremely talented' game designer called Steve Meretzky.



The goal is to be Happy – but what is happiness.

If you don't play you win instantly Have to discover the goal – goal is to discover goal.

If you become immortal you lose the game Insult you in alphabetical order Traal – fight the Beast

Improbability Drive

PGGB – you get drunk

Cause and effect goes wrong.

Marvin.

Cocktail Party.

Database – Guide.

Time Travel.

Cheating is part of game – extra points.

Towels – problem solving.

/ Bureaucracy – wrong address.

Bureaucracy

At the beginning you are feeling extremely chipper. You've just moved into a new house. It's a bit of a mess at the moment, everything's lying around in boxes, but it's a really nice house, which you are able to afford because you've got a new job at double your previous salary, and apart from some silly nonsense from the bank, everything is terrific. That will sort itself out, no doubt. You sent them your change of address card weeks ago. Best of all, you've got a couple of weeks holiday before you start, and your new employers have been very nice to you and given you a return plane ticket to Paris to enjoy yourself for a while.

First problem is the phone. It keeps ringing and you suppose you ought to answer it. Getting to it amongst all your boxes is a problem.

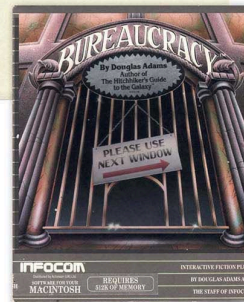
Also in your boxes are various other things you are going to want in the next few days, and finding them without damaging them is going to be a problem. There is your Boysenberry computer, for a start, with its built-in programming language that even an idiot could use, and probably only an idiot would want to. There are all kinds of programs for it which you have to find amongst your boxes. You thought, when you got a computer that it would save you from the usual mess you get yourself into which was having piles and piles of unidentified pieces of paper hanging around. Now you find that you have piles and piles of unidentified floppy disks lying around.

There are check-book balancing programs, loan amortising, eclipse predictors, recipe programs, communication programs, spreadsheets, etc., etc.

A delivery man arrives at the door with something with (what - more programs? A stereo?) something. You have no recollection of ordering it. It turns out that there is someone else with the same name as you living in the street. The delivery man says that things are always getting misaddressed around here, drives him batty.

You are able to take delivery of thing if you like, but you would have to pay by credit card. (He prompts you that he accepts US Excess or Beezer.

You discover that your US Excess card is past its expiry date. You are close to your credit limit on your Beezer card, but can just afford to buy this thing, if you want it.



There were plans for a *Hitchhiker 2*, but a new game called *Bureaucracy* was clearly more urgent in Douglas's mind and there was a reason for that. It was based on a recent real-life experience he'd had while buying his new apartment in Islington. Frustrated with his own bank failing to recognize the new address they were helping him to purchase, and despite his sending of two change of address cards, they kept replying to his former address. After a final stiff complaint, the bank replied in writing, promising to get it right in future – but guess where they sent the letter?

Dear Douglas

NEIL GAIMAN

Dear Douglas

I remember the day I learned you were dead.

I was in Wisconsin being interviewed on the phone by a journalist in Hong Kong, and something that was obviously silly clickbait about Douglas Adams dying went across my computer screen. I snorted, unimpressed. I clicked on the link. I found myself staring at a BBC news screen, and saw the news.

‘Are you all right?’ said the journalist in Hong Kong.

‘Douglas Adams is dead.’

‘Oh yes,’ he said. ‘It’s been on the news here all day. Did you know him?’

‘Yes,’ I said. Of course I knew you. We carried on with the interview, and I don’t know what else was said. The journalist got back in touch several weeks later to say that there wasn’t anything coherent or at least usable on the tape after I learned that you were dead, and would I mind doing the whole interview again?

When we die, we become whole things, and all the times of our life become one. I remembered the last time I saw you, in 1998, when you were in Minneapolis touring with *Starship Titanic* the game, and I remembered it beside the first time I saw you, when you opened the door to me to your flat in Upper Street, Islington, in 1983.

You were 30 and I was 22. You had just returned from Hollywood, where you had had a miserable time trying to make the *Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy* movie. You were welcoming and kind and very funny. You gave me a book of yours I didn’t have and you signed it for me. You were tall, and slightly awkward. You explained that only people who don’t know where their towels are would have come up with knowing where your towel is as an attribute of cool. You were so many things, and none of them were ever cool.

I kept interviewing you over the next few years, and running into you, and eventually I wrote a whole book about you. (You were bemused but kind about helping me with that. And you said nice things about the eventual book, too, even if you had me write your blurb for it.)

I wish I could get to our emails. I was on Compuserve back then, and our correspondence is long-lost. I loved being able to help, when you'd ask me things; I was at my happiest (because you asked) and my saddest (because I could not do it) back then when you wrote to ask if I would write the radio adaptation of *Life, the Universe and Everything*. There was no time.

(I'm so glad I said no. The job went instead to Dirk Maggs, who made magic with it, and carried on on the life course that meant that he and I would eventually work together making radio dramas.)

You were unique. Which is true of all of us, of course, but it's also true that people come in types and patterns, and there was only ever one Douglas Adams. No one else I've ever encountered could elevate Not Writing to an art form as you could. No one else has seemed capable of being so cheerfully profoundly miserable. No one else has ever had your easy smile and crooked nose, nor the faint aura of embarrassment that surrounded you like a protective force field.

After you died people asked me about you. I told them that I didn't think that you had ever been a novelist, not really, despite having been an internationally best-selling novelist who had written a bunch of books which are now seen as classics.

I said I thought that perhaps what you were was something we don't even have a word for yet. A Futurologist, or an Explainer, perhaps. You were able to explain the world to itself in ways that the world won't forget. You could dramatise the plight of endangered species as easily (or at least, as astonishingly well, for nothing you did that involved writing was ever exactly easy) as you could explain to an analog race what it means to find yourself going digital. Your dreams and ideas, practical or impractical, were always the size of a planet, and you carried us along beside you.

We were lucky to have been here when you were writing. I wish you were still here. I want to know what you would say or think about

the world. You'd just have turned seventy. That's not even that old, is it? Not any more.

I miss talking to you, miss strange emails and unexpected phone calls. I miss the whole phenomenon that was you.

From wherever I am to wherever you are,
Neil

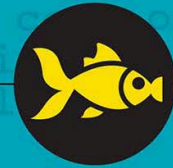


Neil Gaiman first met Douglas, in 1983, as a 22-year-old journalist sent to interview him (above; Neil on the left and Douglas on the right, with the guitar). They became friends. Since then he has written award-winning, bestselling comics and books, including *The Sandman*, *American Gods*, *Neverwhere*, *Stardust* and (with Terry Pratchett) *Good Omens*.

Douglas

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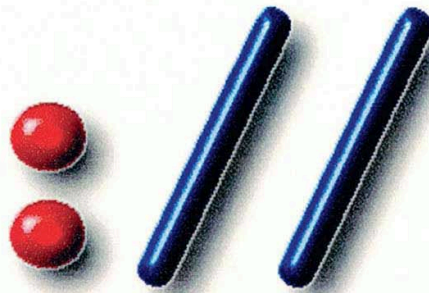
THIRTEEN

Exploring the Digital World

question now is whether or not we have the
the antlers outside the cave and use their
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bring that idea is the reason for wanting
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ou can see from the brief synopsis the pro
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The Secret Empire
The Colonisation of Space has already begun



THE DIGITAL VILLAGE

We just don't know about it yet...

created by

Douglas Adams

Strictly Private & Confidential
Controlled Distribution

Draft 1.0 19 April 1996

'I would have loved to have been a software designer... and work in computer systems. It sounds terribly dull, but actually it's dealing with information and how we shape information, and how we understand it, how we deal with it, what we mean by it – at the most fundamental level. I find it profoundly exciting.' –
Douglas Adams

SETTING UP THE DIGITAL VILLAGE

Central Productions Ltd
46 Charlotte Street
London
W1P 1LX



Telephone 071-637 4602
Telex 291721
Fax 071-580 7780

ASme
081-567-0617

9 May 1991

Mr. Douglas Adams
22 Duncan Terrace
London N1

Dear Douglas

I just wanted to write and thank you very much for giving us so much of your time when we met a few weeks ago.

I have been thinking much about your cave man/antler mentality analogy. I have sent you a copy of the outline of our History of the World in 52 minutes idea, because it is about cave men and antlers although I had never articulated it like that.

It seems to me that once upon a time we did understand both our cave and the world that our cave looked out on. We sat and stared at the stars, heard the wind call and the animals cry and did not feel separate from them. Gradually we developed our antlers and one day they had become so sophisticated that they began to glow. As they glowed ever more brightly they began to shut out the natural light from outside the cave and we started to forget what was out there. We became experts on our cave and saw ourselves as its masters, painting it, living in it and all the while it grew smellier and smellier.

The question now is whether or not we have the nous to move the antlers outside the cave and use their power effectively to understand the world outside and regain a more fitting sense of proportion about our cave and ourselves.

Exploring that idea is the reason for wanting to make the history of the world in a single accessible story. As you can see from the brief synopsis the project should have a considerable interactive element, which is integral to what I see as a multi media project.

Registered Office: Central House, Broad Street, Birmingham B1 2JP. Registered in England and Wales, No. 2422952

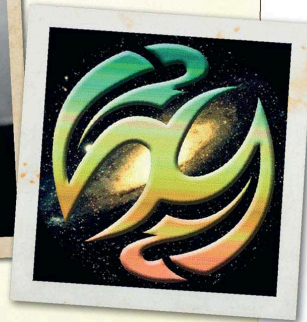
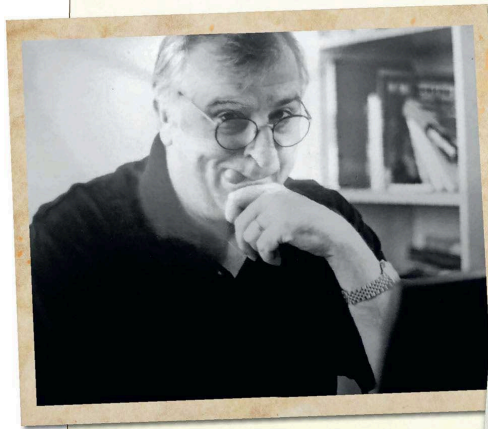
Robbie Stamp, then a producer at Central TV in London, wrote to Douglas in May 1991, thanking him for a recent meeting (above). This meeting seems to have been thought-provoking enough for them to meet many times afterwards, forming a close friendship and a working relationship that culminated in the creation of a multimedia publishing company, The Digital Village (TDV). In the early days of the company, TDV meetings took place in the offices of Douglas's literary agent Ed Victor, who once said: 'Douglas believed that we were in the middle of, not a digital revolution but a digital evolution. He thought that the planet was evolving from an analogue to a digital planet.'

The project is a long term one. I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to talk to you about it.

Yours Sincerely

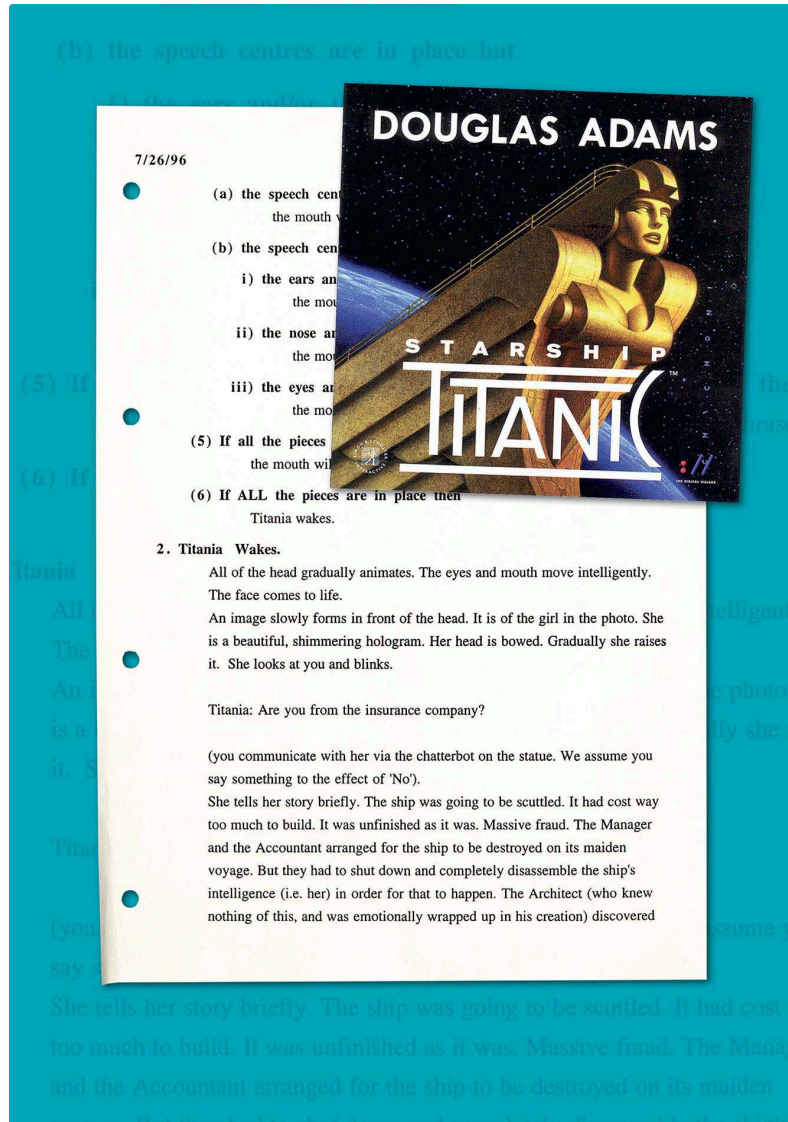
Robbie Stamp

Robbie Stamp
Producer Features Group.



This portrait photograph of Douglas has been hanging in Robbie Stamp's study at home for many years, a testament to and reminder of their firm friendship. The artwork (above, right) is the stylized logo for the 'h2g2' website (it remains the logo today), created at The Digital Village and designed by Jack Kriendler. Then, and even now, h2g2.com was a big deal – Robbie Stamp describes it as a 'plan for the "Earth edition" of the *Guide* – the thought that there was more to say than *Mostly Harmless*'.

STARSHIP TITANIC



One of The Digital Village's earliest projects, and one of the two biggest projects the team undertook (the other being h2g2.com), was the computer game *Starship Titanic*. This is a sample from the draft script of the game.

what was going to happen. There must have been a terrible fight. But by that time Titania was disassembled and unconscious.

She does not know where the ship has been. She says that if you know the night sky above your planet then you can navigate your way home. She will authorise the opening of the door to the Bridge. (When you go there, the inner door will open to you)

She believes that the Architect must have left the ship when it landed on Earth. If you will take the ship back to Earth so that she can look for him, then you can have the ship. Laws of salvage.

3. The Bridge

(you enter this from beside the Arboretum. The inner door will now be open)

The Bridge is very sweepy and beautiful, but surprisingly simple.

The Captain's chair faces out into the huge hemispherical window, through which you can see a starscape, very slowly shifting and swinging. It has a big beautiful curvy console in front of it, divided into three main areas.

There is one single (but very large) button in each area.

One reads 'Stop', one reads 'Go' and the third reads 'Cruise around a bit'

The chair is empty. There is a heavy ornament resting on the 'Cruise Around a bit' button, holding it down.

If you take the ornament off the 'Cruise Around' button, the starscape will settle to a steady (but slow) forward motion.

If you press the Stop button, motion will stop and sound will die away.

If you press the Go button a little panel within the button will light up saying 'Go where?'

At the same time there will be a beep and a light flashing from the navigator's chair which is a little below and to one side of the Captain's chair.

The Navigator's chair is an altogether more elaborate business.



Starship Titanic

At the centre of the Galaxy, on the world of Blerontin, a vast civilisation of which we know nothing is preparing for an event of epic proportions, the launching of the greatest, most gorgeous, most technologically advanced starship ever built – the Starship Titanic.

Snapshot scenes: Bustle to get it ready. Technicians, crewmen, workmen. It is berthed in a giant gantry. We get a sense of enormous size, but no clear view – yet. Journalists hustling to get extra angles on the story. Reports, interviews, hurry, last minute checks.

Disasters have plagued the project, mostly financial. Building it has brought financial disaster on virtually everybody involved, including one entire planet, who have sent along a deputation to protest, but there is one thing that everybody is certain of – the Starship Titanic is the greatest technological achievement of this or any other age, and is utterly indestructible.

The interior of the ship is extraordinary. An Earthman seeing it would think it was a mixture of the tomb of Tutankhamen, the Chrysler Building and Venice. But anyone a little less provincial would recognise it as being the style of Leovinus, the galaxy's most renowned architect. He is an old man now, and the design of the Starship Titanic is the crowning achievement of his career.

Is it ready? Really ready?

'Yes,' says Leovinus the architect, with deep pride.

'Yes,' says Brobostigon the manager, smoothly.

'Yes,' says Scraliontis the accountant, with a sly look at Brobostigon, 'everything is ready...'



The day before the launch.

Leovinus is being feted by the media, and he's enjoying it. It's only slightly spoilt by one particular journalist asking unpleasant, probing questions about alleged irregularities, but there's always one isn't there? Of course there have been problems along the way, but they have all been solved. No, there is no question of corners having been cut, no conspiracy, no one has been bought off. The ship is not about to fall out of the sky. Yes it's a terrible pity about the collapsed economy of Yassacca, but he's an artist not an economist. He gets quite heated. He is clearly passionate about his ship.

That night he goes to have one last look around it. On his way he bumps into the annoying journalist. He probes some more. He asks if it is true that the standard of workmanship has dropped since the building of the ship was moved from Yassacca to Blerontin to save on costs? Leovinus rises to the bait. He insists that the standard of workmanship is the highest possible, and says that he will personally show him round the ship to prove it.

A few workmen are here and there on the ship putting some finishing touches; they are just leaving.

The ship is magnificent, astonishing. From the centre of the ship two great canals lead off, one to the fore, one to the aft. These partly have the effect of cooling the engines, but are also elegant recreational facilities: gondolas ply their way up and down them. Between them lies a deep well, which forms the gigantic keel of the ship. The Staterooms, 1st Class, 2nd Class and SuperGalactic Traveller (or Riff Raff) class are ranged in corridors round the inside of the well. There are bars and restaurants, art galleries, music rooms...

But there *are* anomalies. With mounting alarm Leovinus begins to find more and more things that are not right. Unfinished things, cybersystems that are not working correctly, robots that are, frankly, colliding with doors. The whole of

The Digital Village's computer game of *Starship Titanic* had a tie-in novel, written by Douglas's friend Terry Jones, formerly of Monty Python fame. There were also plans for a movie to follow later, and a draft storyline was found among the archives. These two pages were part of a much longer document that set out the screenplay plot.

SECRET EMPIRE

The First Series:

The first series focusses on two people in particular, and we discover the magnitude of the enterprise through the eyes of each of them.

One is **Robert Darwin** (distant, co-lateral relation). We meet him right at the beginning of Episode One.

He is a computer games designer who owns his own company and is extremely wealthy. He is British, but has mostly worked in America. He now lives in a large and extraordinary hi-tech ranch on the coast of north Queensland, Australia. He loves the Great Barrier Reef, and modern communications means he can run his business from there. (This will be a major location)

He only happened into computer games by accident. He's not really interested in products as such, more in the ideas that give rise to them. He made his fortune not out of great ambition, but as an incidental by-product of his natural intelligence. For him, running something well is more interesting and less trouble than running it badly. A deep understanding of game theory helps. He's forty, good-looking and unmarried. He has an illegitimate daughter, now 19 and at Cambridge. They get on very well.

The second is **Jenny Tchao**, a Japanese-American journalist. She wants a story on Robert Darwin. There have been many, of course, but she wants something better. She will do anything to get close to him, even, it transpires, to the extent of sleeping with him. This is not merely professional ruthlessness, though. She finds him extremely attractive – which complicates things for her.

They both, in very different ways, discover about the Secret Empire – he at the beginning of the first series, she at about Episode 13.

Here's how:

Secret Empire was a concept for an elaborate science-fiction TV series spanning thousands of years of human colonization of space. Douglas had ideas he wanted to explore in a similar fashion to author Isaac Asimov's *Foundation Trilogy*. These few pages from April 1996 represent the tip of an enormous project that might have resulted in a very expensive series. Brillstein Grey Entertainment of Hollywood had outlined the potential TV deal in a fax to Robbie Stamp at The Digital Village in June 1998. Sadly, though, the project never came to fruition.



SERIES STRUCTURE:

The series is planned as a long running epic story of Earth's colonisation of our Galaxy, starting today. Or, as we discover, starting twenty years ago and conducted in the utmost secrecy. Our actual story starts in the present day, at a moment of crisis in the project.

Basic outlines have been created for four seasons of The Secret Empire, with ideas for the fifth season under consideration.

Each season will consist of 22 episodes, each to fill an hour slot – except for the first episode of each season, which will be a feature length episode. This will move the time frame of the story forward one or more centuries. However a plot device which is central to the series concept will ensure that we continue to tell the developing story of a central core of characters, with whom the audience can continue to engage from one series to another.

The movie length establishing episode will introduce the new environment which the characters inhabit, providing appropriate and consistent scientific backgrounds. If the The Secret Empire is successful, the establishing episode will become a significant event in its own right as viewers wait to see what has happened to their favourite characters and what stage humankind's colonisation of space has reached. This approach will allow the writers to focus on story lines within a clearly defined "world" with its own clearly defined set of rules.

Each establishing episode will be set on or around New Year's Eve, in 1999, 2099, 2299, 2599.....

Within each series, each episode will tell a self-contained, stand-alone story, but will also form part of a continually developing narrative.

Typical stories will deal with

- explorers having adventures out at the edge of the Empire's expansion, discovering new worlds and facing unknown hazards.
- settlers trying to establish themselves on new worlds, dealing with the challenges of diverse and conflicting human and alien cultures, ecologies and physical environments
- the evolution of the human race in previously unimagined ways, through the proxies of its machines and ideas
- scientists and test pilots trying to break new technological, psychological and biological barriers.

Draft 1.0,
19 April 1996

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Page 5



- rising political tensions and eventually battles between newly established worlds.

In every case, the struggles and adventures of the pioneers will be overseen and intervened in by our cast of regular characters: there are seven of them, and their role is to manage the expansion of the human race throughout the galaxy. Their role is not so much to be leaders they are more like orchestrators, philosophers, games players. They manage with the lightest possible touch, working to engineer the smallest difference that makes a difference (the 'butterfly' effect). They are The Difference Engineers, and the relationship between them and the pioneers and settlers is like that between chess players and their pawns – except that the chess board is infinitely large and complex, and the opponent is the unknown future.

The group will consist of an Historian, a Mathematician, a Soldier, a Musician, an Evolutionary Biologist, a Journalist and a Games Theoretician

The ways in which they are able to intervene will develop from series to series as technologies, distances and their own physical natures change dramatically over time.

Hence each episode will be able to take as its theme an issue that may be historical, philosophical, technological, political, cultural or moral, but the actual story will usually be an adventure drama set in space or on one of the worlds colonised by the Empire.

Note on technology: There are very real ideas to be explored in the fields of machine intelligence, nanotechnology, game theory, evolutionary theory, complexity theory, virtual reality etc. It will be the aim of The Secret Empire stories to be as literate as possible in these areas, so that as the series develops and the technologies involved become more and more fantastic, they will nevertheless be built onto a strong logical structure.

SERIES ONE

Episode 1 (Movie Opener): The Exmundia project is now twenty years old. Our ships and bases are now throughout the solar system, but the project is plagued with problems and disasters. How will it survive? A remarkable man is sought to turn it around: Robert Darwin. Like Yul Brynner in the Magnificent Seven, he in turn chooses and assembles the strange and eclectic group of talents he thinks, he will need – and one he thinks he probably should have done without.

On New Year's Eve, 1999, a day which mankind spends in an orgy of fear, superstition and exhilaration, he finds himself standing on the moon watching the Earth rise. This is the millennium in which, ready or not, the human race will move out of its cradle.

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19 April 1996

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Other-story ideas: The discovery of a startling new technology – Matter cannot travel faster than light but – it appears – information can. A pair of identical twins is discovered who seem, effectively, to have two halves of the same brain, and it doesn't matter how far separated they are from each other: communication between them is instantaneous. One of them is sent out to a construction action base in the outer reaches of the solar system over one light hour away, the other remains on Earth.

Between them they form a channel of instantaneous communication. Other twins with this ability are sought. However, it turns out to be putting an intolerable psychological strain on them and starts to drive them towards violent nervous breakdowns. Can the effect be understood and reproduced technologically before something terrible happens? Isn't it immoral to subject them to these pressures? But the benefits to humankind etc.?

The spaceside twin is about to be brought home when an accident occurs to another spaceman. Can he be rescued in time? Saving him is utterly dependent on real-time communications with Earth. The twins become nearly psychotic but stick with it: the spaceman is saved and the effect is understood. It should be possible to reproduce it technologically... This leads over time to the development of a new type of secret commuter – people who live on Earth, live perfectly normal home lives, but who for eight hours a day work on the outer planets, and moons by telepresence.

The discovery that faster than light communications exist causes great arguments about another project: the colony ships. Colony ships are being built out in the vicinity of Jupiter, which will take large groups of colonists at speeds of around one tenth of the speed of light to other stars. They will take many decades, maybe centuries to arrive. The debate:

- Wouldn't it be better to wait till faster-than-light travel can be discovered rather than subject these people to such a journey? No, because faster than light travel will never be discovered. It is a physical impossibility.
- But faster than light communications was thought to be a physical impossibility, and now it is well understood.
- That's different!

So, two competing projects are in hand on the outer edges of the solar system: one is the building of the colony ships, based on the assumption that faster-than-light travel will never come about. The other is a project to break or circumvent the light barrier: a group of radical scientists creating technologies that are being flown by reckless daredevil test pilots amongst whom the mortality rate is desperately high.

Draft 1.0,
19 April 1996

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The inherent contradictions between the two projects, let alone the gruesome loss of life, cause enormous, political tensions in Exmundia.

At last the slow colony ships are launched. Not long afterwards, the light barrier is successfully breached – but it's a terribly long way from being a technology that can be easily and safely applied. The faster-than-lighters seem to have lost the argument by winning it.

Over time it becomes clear that most of the conflicts and struggles that occur out in the field are both embodied and resolved within the group of the Difference Engineers. Their continued existence seems to become more and more essential to the long term success of the project. As the end of the 21st century nears, the DEs are all well over a century old, but this process can't go on for ever something more radical needs to be done....

SERIES TWO

Episode 1 (Movie Opener): The technology now exists, in experimental form, to map a human brain into a machine. If this can be done, then it will be possible for the minds of the Difference Engineers to persist forever.

But the implications of this are enormous. How on earth can a human and survive in a machine? And what about the original mind, still in its original body? The exact same person now exists in two different locations, though from the very first second of the experiment, of course, the two 'persons' will be diverging. (Of course, if the mind in the machine is copied to another machine, you then have yet a third person. What are the moral and philosophical problems of just doing a back-up?)

Robert Darwin, the leader of the Difference Engineers, volunteers to be the first guinea pig. His mind is copied into a machine. He wakes up inside it. The experience is terrifying. He calms down, he is kept artificially calm, but it's clear that something is terrible wrong and that he will quickly go mad if something isn't done. The problem is that "mind" isn't an abstract thing. The mind evolved as an organ of the human body, wired to a specific set of receptors (eyes, ears, tongue etc. ...) with control over sensitive and responsive limbs. The world exists as a model in the mind, and information about that world flows interactively along physical nerve pathways. The mind in the machine has urgently to be given physical things to respond to and manipulate or it will collapse into madness.

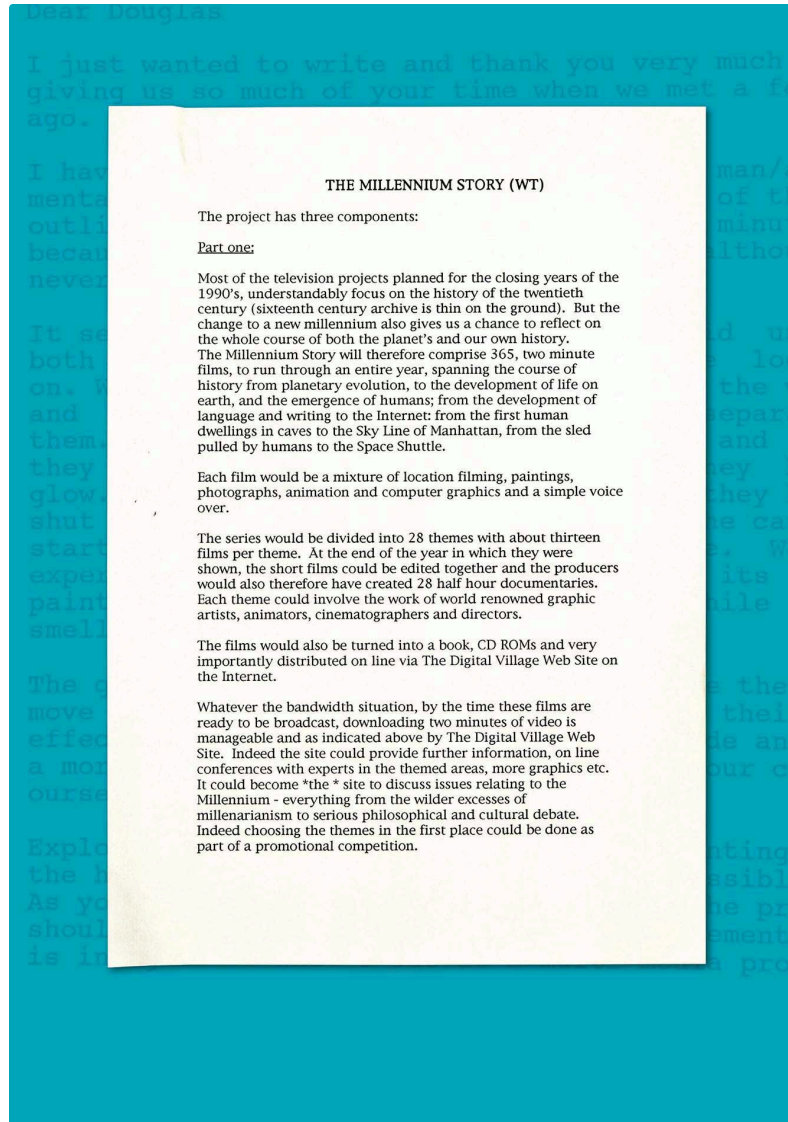
No sooner than they manage to address some of these problems than appalling news arrives. The original person, Robert Darwin's original human form has been murdered. The only form in which he now exists is as this machine entity. Machine/Darwin is utterly devastated – and terrified for his own safety. Who would have murdered him and why? Will the murderer also

Draft 1.0,
19 April 1996

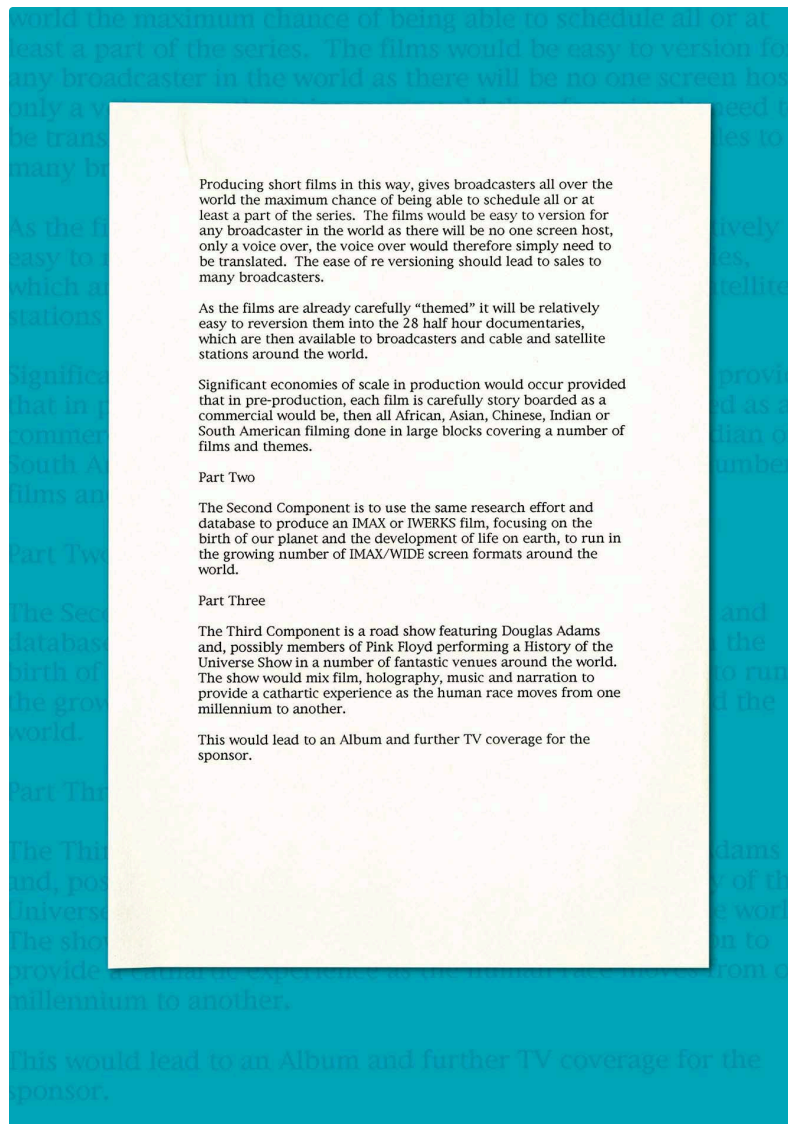
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MILLENNIUM STORY



Little is known of this series concept, which once again suggests Douglas's fascination with human evolution and our relationship with technology. A series in short component pieces might not make for smooth-flowing longer segments, but Douglas's intention is clear. The Digital Village was certainly a fertile ground for letting his imagination run wild.



The possibility of a Douglas Adams/Pink Floyd 'History of the Universe' roadshow sets the mind reeling, but perhaps his ambition would have outstripped the genuine feasibility?

Dear Douglas

ROBBIE STAMP

I miss you still.

I am sure that many other friends will have started their letters in the same way, for I am sure that it remains true for all of us who were lucky to be touched by your friendship and your genius.

You really were the most fantastic company and the last lunch we had together began at lunch time (logically) and finished well past tea time. Those hours felt precious then, how much more so now? I'm not sure that a day goes by when I do not summon to mind an idea of yours, a conversation, an insight, especially about your endless fascination with perspective. What if there was a Super Intelligent Shade of Blue? How does a Rhino experience her world? What if we truly had paranoid AI?

I have just done my first word check for this letter. You will be glad to know that I am still of course using Macs and that Pages (no accident of course) has used the Number 42 for its word count number icon!

I know you were more than a little ambivalent about the way that 42 followed you around – one of my favourites is the fact that there are 42 'Negative Confessions' in the Papyrus of Ani.

These include

39. 'I have not harmed the bread rations of the gods'

42. 'I have not slain sacred cattle'

Maxims I know you lived by...

My father died the day before you did and on the night I came back from the hospital we talked, as we so often did after your move to California, your morning and my evening.

Earlier in the week, as it became clear that my father was gravely ill, you had called the house and found my mother-in-law looking after my children and with such care and concern, spent more than twenty minutes talking to her, although you had never met. It

genuinely still brings tears to my eyes (I know, I know, I don't set a high bar here!) when I think of that call with Sylvia all these years later.

On our call, I sat in the chair in the kitchen and you listened to the story of the previous days and there are few better things you can be for a person who is bereaved than to be 'present' in conversation and to hear the story of a loved one's final hours. We later turned, as we so often did in happier moments, with good red wine and champagne and margaritas, to ideas and imaginings as you sensed that I wanted to be in some other spaces too that evening.

Why have I chosen to write of this again? I told this story at your Memorial and many years have passed since. I think it is because it speaks to your kindness and to friendship and care for family and indeed to the love I felt for my friend and the love I still feel.

You see, I still miss you.



Robbie Stamp (above in 1995 with Douglas) was a television producer when he met Douglas. Together they formed The Digital Village, the company that produced h2g2.com and *Starship Titanic* (see [pages 279](#) and [280–83](#)). He is currently the chairman of Bioss International Ltd.

On 'The Division Bell'

David Gilmour
from Douglas Adams

Dear Dave,
I've listened to the album a lot over the last few days. First of all I think it's terrific. The tracks that really stand out to me are High Hopes, Where were you? and Wearing the Inside Out. I especially like the rhythmic trick you play with the bell on High Hopes. When we hear a tolling bell we instinctively hear it as tolling the barlines, so to speak, so using it to toll the half-beat before the bar creates great internal tensions in the song. When it comes back at the end, there's a great sense that all of our effort is in vain because the bell's own rhythm inevitably reasserts itself. Incidentally, have you thought of calling the album itself 'The Division Bell' rather than High Hopes? I feel that pulling an image from inside a song rather than just repeating a song title gives a feeling that the focus is within the album rather than on its surface. It's a very strong image as well, and one that I'm sure Storm will have a happy time circumventing. (Another great phrase, by the way, is 'Magnets and Miracles' – I think either of those would be stronger than High Hopes)
So far I've had a just few combing and rinsing type thoughts on the lyrics, which are pretty minor. For instance, I think the second line of A Great Day for Freedom should be 'They hurled the blocks to the ground' – for several reasons.
I noticed you were uncertain about 'locks' and wanted to change it to 'chains', but I think you get the same problem – it's quite a well-worn image, and it is only an image. 'Blocks' gets you the same sound as 'locks', so it conforms to your first musical instinct (which is usually the right one) plus it has the advantage of being a picture rather than an image. It was, after all, blocks (of concrete) that were being thrown to the ground.

Douglas was friendly with David Gilmour of Pink Floyd, close enough to hear an advance copy of their new album, released in March 1994 as *The Division Bell*. As a 42nd-birthday present (and as a reward for suggesting that LP title, in this draft letter to Gilmour) Douglas was invited to play guitar on stage with his music heroes in October that year, for two numbers: 'Brain Damage' and 'Eclipse'.

I prefer 'they' rather than 'we' but this is just a personal feeling: I remember the day the wall actually came down. We all celebrated and felt very self-congratulatory, but it struck me at the time that we hadn't actually done anything, they had. We had just raised our glasses to it. Now, a few years later, we still haven't actually done anything, and all the new opportunities that flew up in to the air have dropped back to the ground. So, now we are organising a big charitable bash for Bosnia at which we will all be raising our glasses again. It's a poor substitute.

I think 'to' will work better than 'onto'. As you sing it, the stresses go 'onto' which goes against the way we normally say it. If you just sing 'to' instead you can do more with it, give it more a sense of heaving something.

There's a similar point on the last line of the (Dylanish?) Out the Door. All the words 'In the end I suppose...' are wasted when all you want to say is 'You just can't win.' Make 'em wait for it. Leave the line half-empty, then come in with 'You just can't win'.

I've got quite a few observations of this kind, but they are all tiny like this and I think it would be quicker to go over them with you in person when I next see you.

There was one song you particularly wanted me to look at, She Takes It Back. I haven't been able to make out from the tape what all the lyrics are – except for one verse 'So I spat on her and lied to her...etc', which I think is actually one of the best verses on the album, so I wouldn't want to change it. The last verse seems to fall apart and I guess that's what you wanted me to look at. I haven't managed to come up with anything yet, because I've only just sat down and deciphered what I could of what was there! I'll see what I can do.

However, listening to that track, and listening to one of the instrumental sections of the album together gave me an idea for a whole other song. I don't suppose you're interested in more songs at the moment, but I'll show it to you anyway. It's based on that terrible US Army slogan, 'Be All That You Can Be'

Family Values

Kill all that you can eat
Eat all that you can see
Burn everything to give you heat
Be all that you can be.

Take all that you can steal
Steal everything that's free
Burn all that you can breathe, sweet baby
Be all that you can be

Drive everywhere you go
Pave everything you see
Drill everything beneath your feet
Be all that you can be

Push everything that's near

Pull everything that's far
Grab everything within your reach
That's everything you are

Rape everything you love
Beat everything you win
Kill everything you fight for, baby
Be all that you can be

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I've done a rough tune for it that's quite simple, but you might not want to hear it if you were interested enough in it to do a tune yourself. I think it should have a sort of lyrical, anthem-like feel, as if it was something uplifting and heart-warming. Something they can sing along to.

I've got a structural suggestion to make. I thought that after about eight minutes of instrumental introduction that the opening line of lyric could have been stronger than 'As you look around this room...' My instant top-of-head thought (before I even knew what the song was about) was that it could be something like 'As you look around my life...' Then I wondered what I meant by that, and started wandering off on a new train of thought, which might either interest you, or might go in directions you don't want to go in.

The line gave me a sense of intrusion, of being exposed. I felt like that while I was under investigation by the Inland Revenue, and there's a good friend of mine (Bywater) who spent a long period being harassed by bailiffs and eventually went bankrupt. You really end up rigid with hatred at these little berks with pencil moustaches, dandruff and no conversation who take over your life. So anyway I sat and wrote another lyric (at end of letter). It's in standard 12 bar blues format – which is not something I can remember having heard on a PF record. There may be some specific reason why you feel that a 12 bar blues is not the right sort of thing for a Floyd album, but I think that if it was done with the rich, thunderous, many-layered sound of Floyd it could be extremely effective.

If you like the idea at all, then I have a specific idea of where it might go. I mention this slightly nervously, because what I'm suggesting may seem to you like a radical disruption of something that is already exactly as you want it to be, in which case please just ignore it. Here's the idea in any case. You split the opening instrumental section just an instant before the piano comes in. A few bars before the split you start to scatter a few rhythmic hints and rumbles that something's coming. Then you open the song with a pounding blues riff. You do the song. You end the song fairly abruptly on 'embrace'. Just the lead guitar plays out its last line, fading into the distance, without the drums, bass etc. Immediately underneath the last couple of phrases of disappearing guitar you bring in the piano part and the whole quiet, lyrical mood resumes,

though now, of course, there's a slight sense of paranoia and anger and things not being quite what they seem that's hanging in the air for it to play off. Then, when the opening lines of 'What do you want from me' arrive, they've got an added resonance. Well, see if you like it.

Some other comments: You mentioned that the fade ins and outs were just cobbled together roughly at the moment and were subject to change. Well, I think that it might be a good thing to cut down a bit on the synth whistling sounds, only because anybody with a synth can do those now. Since you can call on much greater resources than just a synth and a mixing desk I think that you could do something much more effective using dramatic and unusual recorded sound. Send someone out with a DAF machine to get the sound of huge rocks dropping into the sea, or cars crashing or aeroplane propellers. Or ambient sound from unusual locations – I've got some tape of a raucous Shanghai traffic jam, and another tape of 200 hippos belowing in a pool with a high curved river bank behind them. etc.

Another thing you mentioned was that the orchestrated play out of High Hopes was a bit bland at the moment. A thought that occurred to me when I listened was that you could lay in a manic, swirling harpsichord part that doubles time from one repeat of the chord sequence to the next. I've always wondered why nobody (at least, nobody that I've heard) has ever used a real, full-blooded, play-it-with-a-welding-mask-on harpsichord going full-tilt on a rock album before. Put a howling lead guitar part over it and you might end up with something really wild. I can play you some examples of what I mean when I get back from St Croix if you're interested.

Anyway, I could go on like this for pages, but don't want to waste my time and yours if it's not useful. The only reason I have to time to write song lyrics at the moment is that I have incredibly pressing work of my own waiting to be finished.

En'joy skiing,
love to Polly,
Best,
Douglas

Mr Philips

Mr Philips, Mr Philips
Is on my case
Mr Philips, Mr Philips
Is on my case.
Don't know why he's picked on me
Five billion people in the human race.

Mr Philips, Mr Philips
Shouting through my letter box
Mr Philips, Mr Philips
On his knees down at my letter box
Every time I go out
Seems I have to change the locks

Mr Philips, Mr Philips

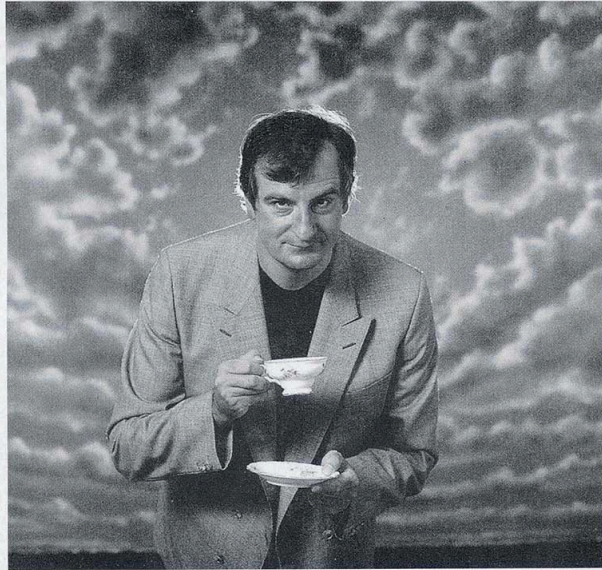
Going through my bank accounts
Mr Philips, Mr Philips
Snooping through my bank accounts
Can't understand what he's after,
Searching for very specific amounts

Mr Philips, Mr Philips
Nosing through my garbage pails
Mr Philips, Mr Philips
Crawling through my garbage pails
Prove what he wants with that garbage
Prove that I'm the Prince of Wales

Mr Philips, Mr Philips
Is on my case
Mr Philips, Mr Philips
Away somewhere and on my case
So I'll just stay and amuse myself,
In Mrs Philip's warm embrace.

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Dead for Tax Reasons



Douglas Noel Adams

11th March 1952 - 11th May 2001

"So Long and Thanks for all the.. ."

Douglas died unexpectedly, aged 49, after a workout in his local gym in Montecito, California. The world was rocked by the news on Saturday 11 May 2001. The official appreciation society ZZ9 (see [page 174](#)) made this tribute issue (above) of their regular fanzine *Mostly Harmless*.

Douglas Adams was a six-foot-five-and-a-half, left-handed man and struggled to live in an altogether smaller more right-handed world. I think that contributed to his keenness to keep blowing it up.

'I love deadlines,' said Douglas Adams. 'I love the whooshing sound they make as they whistle past.'

When I first met him, he was six months past the final, beyond which the sky will fall, deadline for *Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency*. He had been at it for over three years and had written one sentence. It was a brilliant sentence, an authentic Douglas Adams sentence. It was 'High on a rocky promontory sat an electric monk on a bored horse.' Thirteen words down, seventy-nine thousand nine hundred and eighty-seven to go and three months to do it. It marked the start of the cat and mouse game that was the crazy joy of being Douglas Adams' editor. Waylaying Douglas, and teasing him in to writing his book was not for the faint-hearted, requiring total focus and all the Machiavellian sneakiness that one could muster. But the results of being invited to share Douglas's imagination were worth anything.

Douglas would not always share everything though. Near the beginning of the *Long Dark Tea-Time of the Soul* there are strange

references to a single banana in a small bowl on a hospital bedside table. When I read it, I asked him what the banana was about. 'Wait and see,' he said with a mischievous grin. So I waited. Shortly after the book was published, I remembered the unresolved banana mystery and asked him about it. Douglas reminded me that since the banana episode he had let several cats out of the bag, some of them had gone off and had kittens and it had proved rather difficult to round them all up again; then confessed that he had completely forgotten what the banana joke was, but he was sure it had been a good one. From time to time over the years I asked him if he had remembered yet, the last time was only a few weeks ago. Now I will never know. And I cannot bear that.

Sue Freestone, May 2001



A version of this piece about Douglas – by Sue Freestone, his long-suffering book editor (and great friend) – was published in *The Bookseller* after Douglas's untimely death.



Douglas Adams' teddy bear, complete with its own towel draped around its shoulders, displayed in the St John's College Library, Cambridge.

Afterword by Kevin Jon Davies

There's the mad housefly-cum-fruit-bat-*thingy* called Agrajag that confronts Arthur Dent in *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*. The creature's lifeline zig-zagged with that of our bewildered hero, as mine has regularly intersected with that of Douglas Adams and his works. For years, Douglas and the cast members of various *Hitchhiker's* productions have kindly tolerated this fly-on-the-wall documenting their craft with enthusiasm.

I never could get the hang of Thursdays, apart from 9 November 1978. The day I met Douglas and first shoved a microphone under that magnificent nose. He'd just joined *Doctor Who* as script editor, after *Hitchhiker's* had debuted on Radio 4, and was fast becoming a mini-industry. 'I'm doing a book version for Pan,' he revealed, 'Out late next year, assuming I manage to finish the bloody thing!' Of course, with hindsight I would tell him, 'Stop what you're doing and finish that book!' It would be the real start of his fortune and fame.

One year later and I'd joined a little animation company in West London called Pearce Studios, run by my talented, BAFTA-winning boss, Rod Lord. My chance meeting with producer Alan J.W. Bell led to a contract for us providing graphics for the TV series of *Hitchhiker*, and I was thrust into Douglas's professional orbit.

I recorded further interviews with him on video, spoke at fan conventions where he was guest of honour and, in 1993, sat nervously while he watched my final edit of *The Making of Hitchhiker's Guide* for which he'd generously allowed me to write new scenes for his precious characters. Later that year, he invited me to art direct the big sliver book, *The Illustrated Hitchhiker's*, using early digital compositing techniques, in the days when nobody had yet heard of Photoshop.

The last time I saw him, he'd just made a speech at the Public Awareness of Science Drama Awards in December 1998. He was mobbed as he came off stage and so I waited to see him at the wine

and cheese party afterwards, but he went home. The following year he emigrated and that was that. The day we heard in 2001 that he'd died, so tragically young at 49, we all felt bereft.

Being asked by Unbound to dig through his personal archives has been a delight, an honour and a challenge. What to include, what to leave out? We've concentrated on the paperwork, for he did his most famous stuff in the days before computers. His handwriting and terrible typing feel like precious artefacts now, and oh how we wish he was still here. Mind you, I'm acutely aware that if he were, he wouldn't want me or anyone else poking about in his unfinished pages and seeing the agony it took to write down his ideas and craft those sentences. I hope you've enjoyed this collection for its unique perspective on a startling and wildly intelligent mind. Thanks, Douglas, it's been a blast.



Kevin Jon Davies on Towel Day, which is celebrated in honour of Douglas Adams every year on 25 May.

KJD

PS I'd also like to thank Douglas's family, the team at Unbound, Kathryn and Adam at St John's Library, Cambridge, my wife Elaine and my son Liam, who have all been on this journey with me.



A teenage Kevin Jon Davies with Douglas Adams on set in 1980.

- Sorry to have
missed you,

Best wishes

Love Ade

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A Note on the Editor

Born in 1961, the son of a librarian and a millwright, Kevin Jon Davies grew up enthralled with the BBC's *Doctor Who* and *The Goon Show*. In 1978, *The Hitchhiker's Guide* radio series seemed to combine the best of both, so he sought out its then little-known author Douglas Adams, for a fanzine interview. After two years at art college instead of sixth form, Davies joined Pearce Studios Ltd as a teenage trainee, working for animator Rod Lord on the award-winning TV graphics for *The Hitchhiker's Guide* (BBC, 1981) and Gerry Anderson's *Terrahawks* (LWT, 1983). A year spent as an Effects Animator at Walt Disney UK on *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* (1988) led to five more at Passion Pictures Ltd, blending 'toon' characters with live action for international TV commercials.

Davies turned director in 1993 with two BBC retrospectives, *The Making of the Hitchhiker's Guide* and *Doctor Who: More Than 30 Years in the Tardis*. He designed *The Illustrated Hitchhiker's Guide* (1994), conducted celebrity interviews at Sci-Fi Channel (Europe), helmed film dramas *Shakedown*, *Return of the Sontarans* (1994) and episodes of *Space Island One* (Sky, 1998) and produced DVD extras for such BBC classics as *Adam Adamant Lives!*, *Blake's 7* and *Dad's Army*. In 2003, Davies first met director/adaptor Dirk Maggs, shooting

promo films for his many Adams-related projects, including the latter four *Hitchhiker's Guide* radio series and the *2012/13 Live Tour*, all starring the original radio cast. Davies first dipped into Adams' personal papers at Cambridge for unused scraps to include in the final radio series, *The Hexagonal Phase* (2018). This led to his recent deep-dive through those same archives, for this book. Davies is a visiting lecturer for the Film & TV Production MA course at The University of Hertfordshire.



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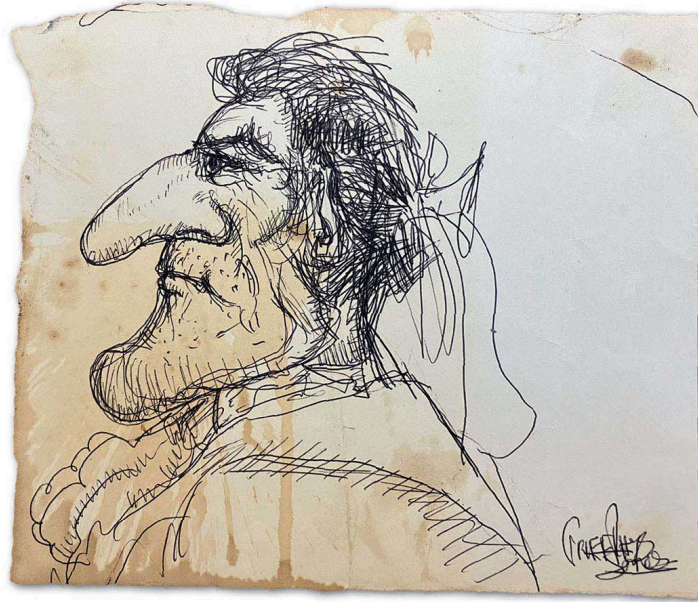
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Caricature of Douglas Adams as Sir Lucius O'Trigger in a Cambridge production of Sheridan's play *The Rivals*, drawn by fellow cast member, and now celebrated comedian and writer, Griff Rhys Jones.

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TITLE PAGE: Drawing of Douglas Adams by Rod Lord of Pearce Studios, as used in the animated sequences he directed for the 1981 BBC TV series of *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*.

CONTENTS PAGE: Douglas Adams photographed in rehearsals by Cliff Pinnock, the assistant floor manager of the 1981 BBC TV *Hitchhiker* series.

FOREWORD BY STEPHEN FRY: Stephen Fry in 2005 at the London première of *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* movie, in which he voiced The Book.

Footnotes

One: Early (Talking) Doors

¹ 144 Piccadilly refers to a then recent 'Hippydilly' squat/protest at a five-storey disused mansion at Hyde Park Corner in London. It ended with a police raid, arrests and tabloid headlines.

² Blue Beat was an English record label that released Jamaican R&B and Ska music in the 1960s, a style favoured by skinheads. The term 'bluebeat' became generic for all kinds of Jamaican pop music.

Three: Collaborations

^{*} Very stupid word which won't be used again in this book.